

Bonn to help pay for Soviet immigration

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy said Sunday that Germany would give the Jewish state substantial long-term aid to help it meet the cost of settling a wave of immigrants from the Soviet Union. On return from a visit to Germany, Mr. Levy said an Israeli-German committee would meet in Bonn in three weeks to discuss ways to implement the German pledge. He said the package included grants and loans but did not disclose the amount. "The agreements reached were very favourable to Israel. It is serious aid for immigration," Mr. Levy said at Ben Gurion airport on returning from his three-day trip, which also took in Italy. Israel is struggling to house some 18,000 Soviet Jews who arrived last year. A further 300,000 are expected in 1991. Mr. Levy met Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Chancellor Helmut Kohl in Bonn. He then stopped in Rome for talks with Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis.

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Velayati delivers message to Qaboos

NICOSIA (AP) — Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani, in a message to Sultan Qaboos Ben Said of Oman, stressed Iran's desire to take part in the post-war security plan for the Gulf region, Iran's official news agency said Sunday. The Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati delivered the message Saturday during a meeting with Sultan Qaboos in Muscat. IRNA said Mr. Rafsanjani's message expressed pleasure over the liberation of Kuwait and said Iran was willing to work towards a regional security plan based on the common historical, religious and economic ties with the Gulf states.

Khaddam in Beirut

BEIRUT (AP) — Syrian Vice President Abdul Hakim Khaddam held talks Sunday with President Elias Hrawi and Prime Minister Omar Karame on ways to accelerate an Arab League brokered plan to end Lebanon's civil war. Mr. Khaddam arrived overland from Syria on his second visit to Beirut this year. He was accompanied by Brigadier General Ghazi Kenaan, head of the Syrian army intelligence in Lebanon, a presidential statement said.

Iran executes 34

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian authorities executed 34 people for drug smuggling in the northeastern city of Mashhad Sunday, the Iranian news agency IRNA said. It said the 34, who included a woman and two Afghans, were found guilty of possessing and selling heroin.

War hero elected leader of Algerian party

ALGIERS (R) — Berber leader Hocine Ait Ahmad, a hero of Algeria's war for independence, was unanimously elected secretary-general of the Socialist Forces Front (FFS) by the opposition party's first congress. Mr. Ait Ahmad, 63, said he would transform the FFS into the locomotive of democracy in Algeria and counter the growing influence of the Fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), which won a majority in local government elections last June.

No political deal over Iran-held Briton

NICOSIA (AP) — Mohammad Ali Yazdi, head of Iran's judiciary, Sunday denied there was a political deal to release jailed Briton Roger Cooper. Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported. However, Mr. Yazdi also said in reference to Mr. Cooper that "naturally any prisoner would be released after completing his prison term," said IRNA. Mr. Yazdi, speaking to a group of judiciary officials, noted the freeing of an Iranian student last week in London but indicated this was separate from Mr. Cooper's case, said the news agency.

Iran reports more acid rain, oil slick

NICOSIA (AP) — Acid rain, a recurring phenomenon since oil wells in Kuwait and Iraq were set ablaze during the Gulf war, again fell in southeastern Iran, and a slimy oil slick reached Iranian shores, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported. The agency said "black rain" fell in Kerman, capital of the province, covering streets with polluted water. "Polluted clouds" were moving further southeast, IRNA said. It added that a "thick, red and green" oil slick had reached the port city of Daylam, in southern Bushehr province.

Heavy casualties reported in Ethiopia

NAIROBI (R) — Thousands of people were reported killed or wounded in large battles across northern Ethiopia in the past week as government troops fought to drive back rebel offensives. The radio of the rebel Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) said Sunday that 4,600 government troops were killed.

Iraqi parliament to meet; reports say revolt continuing

Combined agency dispatches

THE IRAQI parliament has been called to session Wednesday, presumably to discuss and advance political reforms promised by President Saddam Hussein while the country is grappling with internal revolts.

Iraqi newspapers Sunday reported scenes of death, destruction, chaos and looting in southern cities during the revolt, which President Saddam says has been quelled.

They also published their first photographs of destruction in the rebellion which broke out in the mainly Shi'ite Muslim south after Iraq's army relinquished Kuwait 18 days ago. President Saddam said in a televised speech on Saturday that government forces had crushed the revolt in the south, which he said was backed by neighbouring Iran. He vowed to quell a continuing Kurdish uprising in the north.

Commenting on the unrest, the Defence Ministry newspaper Al Qadisiyah said: "Aggression launched by the United States and its allies was a dangerous in-between chapter which tried to prepare for creating disturbances and to dismember Iraq."

Reporting from Hilla, capital of Babylon province, the ruling Baath Party organ Al Thawra said: "The scenes of destruction, death and looting all over the province are beyond description."

Most of Hilla's 11 health centres and three city-centre hospitals had been destroyed or looted of medicines and equipment, the newspaper quoted provincial health director Hassan Qaddouri as saying.

Al Thawra said rioters fired heavy weapons, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades during the fighting in Hilla. Pictures in Al Thawra and Al Qadisiyah showed bodies, including a child's, outside a build-

ing, as well as Baath Party headquarters, health centres and schools with their belongings scattered and destroyed.

Al Thawra quoted a man named Khodor Abbas as saying rioters imprisoned him and other people for 14 days in a school basement before Iraqi troops recaptured the area.

In Karbala, 80 kilometres south of Baghdad, destruction was immense, the newspaper said.

It quoted local governor Ghazi Mohammad as saying government offices, party headquarters, banks, police stations and civil defence departments were destroyed.

Official buildings which had not been bombed by U.S. planes in the six-week Gulf war had been damaged by the "new aggression," Al Thawra said.

In the streets, even traffic lights and statues were smashed. Piles of guns and ammunition were still scattered about and some were

hidden in the city's holy shrine. Turkish peasants in border villages were quoted Sunday as saying the sound of artillery fire and explosions coming from the direction of Iraq has quietened down for the past couple of days.

Villagers in the areas where the Turkish, Iraqi and Syrian borders converge said insurgents on the Iraqi side of the frontier were seen towing with tractors some unidentified heavy army vehicles and weapons towards Zakhu, which is about 65 kilometres southeast of the border, according to the semi-official Anatolian news agency.

Turkish newspapers reported Saturday that Kurdish rebels had gained control of a northern area and flown a Kurdish flag at the Iraqi border crossing point. The reports also said Kurdish rebels were seen capturing and taking away some Iraqi soldiers.

Radio Baghdad said Iraq's

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RAMADAN IS HERE: A scene Sunday from the souq in downtown Amman full of Ramadan shoppers (Photo by Youssef Al 'Allan)

Food for all must be world undertaking — Crown Prince

Jordanian mothers and children need immediate international assistance

POLICY-MAKERS have a tendency to overlook "people issues" in favour of seemingly more weighty political ones, and the world community should pay more attention to the fact that in politics, "people must matter."

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said Sunday. And in this "people politics," the ensuring of food for all people must be a fundamental concern, he told a conference at Oxford University.

Food is an inalienable human right, and this has been emphasised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, and the subsequent International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, the Crown Prince told the forum entitled "Food as a human right

— the impact of the Gulf crisis on the current international crisis in refugee situations."

There is a critical need for a "global plan for food," he said. Food security should not depend on nations' charity, nor should it be held hostage of power politics. Today, the world is witnessing the sad spectacle of abundance of food alongside with starvation in the world community, he said.

While the Gulf crisis has created widespread economic and social problems in the Middle East, Jordan has been especially victimised. Severe economic hardships have resulted from the embargo imposed on Iraq — Jordan's biggest trading partner — by the United Nations; the influx

of evacuees and refugees from Gulf states; and jobs lost by Jordanians based in the Gulf, who had repatriated hard currency to Jordan, the Crown Prince pointed out. The hardships stemming from the Gulf crisis constitute an additional burden on Jordan beyond the continuing impact of the presence of Palestinian refugees from the occupied territories, he said.

The impact of the Gulf crisis is perhaps most dramatically felt by Jordanian mothers and children. There is a growing danger of malnutrition and disease, he said. International organisations, and the world community at large, must accelerate assistance, he told the forum (see full text on page 4).

Kuwait pledges democracy within 6 months to a year

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait said Sunday it would hold parliamentary elections within six months to a year, a move welcomed by Western diplomats but greeted with scepticism by some pro-democracy campaigners.

Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Abdul Rahim Al Awadi said democracy would be introduced as soon as an estimated 400,000 Kuwaitis who were abroad during the Iraqi occupation returned and the population was re-registered.

Asked how long it would take, he said: "Maybe six months, maximum one year but I don't think it's going to be that much."

"This is an obligation by the government, there's no going back on that," Mr. Awadi told reporters.

The United States and Britain, leading members of the military alliance which fought Iraqi forces

last month, had been urging the restored ruling Al Sabah family to set an early date for the restoration of parliament.

A senior Western diplomat said Mr. Awadi's statement was "exactly the sort of thing we were looking for." He said it would enable the government and opposition to concentrate on restoring public services and rebuilding the country.

But a prominent pro-democracy campaigner, Professor Laila Al Qadhi of Kuwait University, said she did not believe the government and there was no need anyway to wait so long.

"I don't believe them. I think six months to one year is too long. While there is martial law, which is basically unconstitutional, every Kuwaiti who has spoken for democracy is under threat," she told Reuters in an interview.

One Kuwaiti opposition leader was shot and wounded at his home by unidentified gunmen soon after liberation.

Qadhi also said women must be allowed to vote. The minister made no reference to the issue nor to broadening the franchise.

At present only about 60,000 men, fewer than 10 per cent of Kuwaiti citizens, are entitled to vote for parliament, which the emir suspended in 1988 at the height of the Iran-Iraq war.

Mr. Awadi's pledge on elections appeared to go beyond a statement by the prime minister, Crown Prince Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah. He told visiting U.S. senators Saturday that democracy would have to wait until security was restored and the country rebuilt (see page 2).

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Concern mounts over post-war purge of foreigners in Kuwait

KUWAIT (R) — Western human rights observers are concerned about the ill-treatment or expulsion of foreign workers in a post-war purge of immigrants in Kuwait.

Worst hit are Palestinians suspected of "collaborating" with the Iraqi army during its seven-month occupation. But Sudanese, Somalis, North Africans and Iraqis have also been affected.

Some of those rounded up and abandoned at the Iraqi border in recent days have been living in Kuwait illegally but others had papers allowing them to work here, said Andrew Whitley of the New York-based human rights organisation Middle East Watch.

Some said they were tortured and beaten after being detained and held by police and army since U.S.-led forces entered the emirate at the end of February.

They believe they are being made scapegoats in reprisal for the alleged actions of Iraqi troops.

Western sources, citing semi-official U.S. estimates, said 8,000 foreigners had been arrested after the war. Half were Palestinians and the rest came from other Arab countries, including Sudan and Somalia.

They said about 300 Palestinians had been executed by members of the Kuwaiti resistance or the army.

Human rights workers said they were particularly concerned that innocent people were being punished as collaborators.

Several international organisations are monitoring Kuwait's treatment of foreigners. A United Nations team is studying alleged Iraqi human rights abuses during the occupation but also expects to be approached about

conditions in post-war Kuwait. Before the war, foreigners outnumbered Kuwaitis because Kuwait imported large numbers of workers.

Areas where Palestinians and poorer foreign families live have been rife with complaints of human rights abuses despite a pledge by the prime minister, Crown Prince Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah, that the law would apply equally to all communities. John Kerry, a member of a U.S. Senate delegation that visited Kuwait at the weekend, said he was unaware of retaliation against Palestinians.

But he added: "We didn't fight and die here to see a whole new level of human rights abuses committed."

Mr. Whitley said he watched a Kuwaiti military bus dump 23

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Israel allows Arab workers back into Tel Aviv, Haifa

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Exactly two months after the Gulf war began, Israel Sunday allowed Palestinian workers from the occupied territories back into two main cities targeted by Iraqi missiles.

As the workers streamed into Tel Aviv, the city district court imposed a stiff sentence on Ami Popper, 22, after convicting him of the murders of seven Gaza Palestinians waiting for day labour in nearby Rishon Lezion last May.

Popper was sentenced to seven life terms in prison after pleading guilty to the charges.

Popper banged his fist on a table and shouted "no no" when the sentence was passed, and his family hurled abuse at the prosecutor and the three judges.

Popper opened fire with a sub-machine gun on about 50 Palestinians as they waited to be hired as casual labourers south of Tel Aviv.

The massacre sparked three days of protests in the occupied territories in which 13 more Palestinians died.

The judges said Popper fired indiscriminately, even reloading. They called it "an unprecedented, abominable deed,"

and added a 20-year sentence, to be served concurrently, for the attempted murder of the 10 Arabs who were wounded.

Popper had maintained he was trying to kill one man in the group who he claimed had molested him as a child. He said he was not accountable for his actions and was mentally incompetent to stand trial.

However, he dropped that line of defence Sunday after a committee of psychiatrists hired by his attorney supported the court's view that he was competent to stand trial.

The army lifted a total ban on Palestinian labourers entering Tel Aviv and Haifa, the two main targets of missile attacks during the war which killed two and wounded 239.

On Saturday, an unidentified gunman opened fire on Palestinian labourers in Nes Ziona next to Rishon Lezion, wounding one in the leg.

Some 29,000 workers came to Israel from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip compared to about 120,000 before the war.

Many heeded calls by leaders of an uprising in the occupied territories for a strike and to stay away from jobs. It was also the

first day of the fasting month Ramadan.

Only Palestinians registered with the Israeli employment service were allowed in and their employers had to return them home by dusk.

Shmuel Ozenbooy, a military spokesman, said 20,000 Arabs came in from the West Bank and 9,000 from Gaza.

Both the Unified Leadership of the Uprising and the Islamic resistance movement Hamas called the strike to mark the two-month anniversary of the war.

"We should raise the Palestinian and Iraqi flags, write slogans against American and allied aggression against Iraq and call on the occupier to withdraw from Arab lands," the latest unified leadership directive said.

The army confined the Palestinians in the occupied territories to their homes at the start of the Gulf war on Jan. 17.

It gradually eased the restrictions but a night curfew has remained in effect.

The army moved the start of the night curfew forward two hours to 8 p.m. local time (1800 GMT) from Sunday.

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Israelis say Bush coming, but no surprises

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — President George Bush is to come to Israel for the first visit by a U.S. head of state in 12 years, a cabinet minister said Sunday.

Speaking to reporters after the weekly cabinet meeting, Transport Minister Moshe Katsav said the session focused on last week's visit by Secretary of State James Baker and possible next moves on Middle East peace.

Asked if the government had received official notification of a Bush visit, Mr. Katsav said: "Yes, but there is no date yet."

Local press reports speak of an April visit but neither Israeli nor U.S. officials here could confirm this.

Mr. Bush visited Israel as vice-president in 1986 but no president has been here since Jimmy Carter in March 1979.

Mr. Bush annoyed Israeli officials when he visited the Middle

(Continued on page 5)

Yugoslavia slides towards civil war

BELGRADE (Agencies) — Temperatures rose further in Yugoslavia's shaky federation Sunday, edging the country closer to civil war despite calls for calm from the embattled state presidency.

Serbia's communist president, Slobodan Milosevic, capped a hectic political week when he said Saturday that Yugoslavia's big republic no longer recognised the authority of the federal presidency.

"The destruction of Yugoslavia has entered its final agonising stage," Mr. Milosevic said in a televised address blaming an anti-Serbian coalition for the country's turmoil.

Franjo Tudjman, president in rival non-communist Croatia, said it was his republic that was under threat and Mr. Milosevic was paving the way to dictatorship.

Mr. Milosevic's speech followed the resignation on Friday of a close ally and fellow Serb, Yugoslav President Borisav Jovic.

Mr. Jovic quit as the head of the eight-man federal presidency after other presidency members refused to back his demand for a state of emergency.

"Jovic's political manoeuvre is intended to paralyse the country's leadership, allowing generals to take command over Yugoslavia and then eventually proclaim him

the president," said Vjesnik, Croatia's leading daily.

The presidency includes a representative from each of Yugoslavia's six republics and two provinces. Saturday, the representatives from pro-communist Montenegro and from Vojvodina, a partially autonomous province of Serbia, also announced their resignations.

The remaining five presidency members met Saturday and urged more talks among the republics on Yugoslavia's future.

Macedonia's presidential representative, Vasil Tupurkovski, said in a statement that Mr. Milosevic has in fact "called for chaos and civil war with tragic consequences."

Mr. Tupurkovski said Mr. Milosevic wanted "to introduce brutal repression" in Yugoslavia, and that was an admission that the Serbian leader's policies have "sustained a definite defeat."

Stipe Mesic, Croatia's representative on the presidency, said after Saturday's meeting that he was not optimistic about the democratic outcome of the Yugoslav crisis.

Rival Croatia and Serbia have both put their police and militia reserves on high alert, prompting many diplomats and Yugoslav politicians to conclude that the chances for a peaceful solution are dimming.

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Millions vote in Soviet referendum

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Millions of citizens went to the polls nationwide Sunday to decide whether to preserve the Soviet Union. Tensions erupted into violence in the Republic of Moldavia, where nationalists attacked would-be voters.

Hanging in the balance was not only the fate of this vast nation and its more than 100 ethnic groups, but the future of Mikhail Gorbachev.

The Soviet president lobbied heavily for approval and predicted victory in the referendum, which asks citizens whether they want to stay together in a revamped federation.

No results were immediately available, but public opinion polls indicated it would pass, giving Mr. Gorbachev the popular mandate he seeks to crack down on separatists.

Mr. Gorbachev voted Sunday and said a breakup of the Soviet Union would be a disaster for Europe and the world.

But Mr. Gorbachev and his rival Boris Yeltsin seemed heading for a major showdown. "If some madman should arise to provoke a breakup of our union, that would be a disaster for this country, for Europeans, for the entire world," Mr. Gorbachev told reporters at a polling station near his Moscow home.

Across the capital Yeltsin, ex-communist leader of the giant

Russian Federation's parliament, said he believed Mr. Gorbachev aimed to preserve the Soviet system and the Communist Party and government bureaucracy without fundamental change.

"I think it is impossible to improve the life of the people while preserving the system. It should be destroyed and a new one based on democratic principles should be created — a union of republics under collective leadership," Mr. Yeltsin declared.

Mr. Gorbachev has been pushing for the referendum since December to bypass democratically elected republican legislatures he says are dominated by nationalist extremists. The vote is his attempt to appeal directly to the people to restore national unity shattered by sometimes violent ethnic, legal and political disputes.

Six of the 15 Soviet republics — Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Georgia, Armenia and Moldavia — representing 10 per cent of the 200 million eligible voters, refused to participate in the referendum. But voting on the question was held in some isolated, heavily Russian areas of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Moldavia.

In Moldavia's capital, Kishinev, hundreds of nationalists

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Democracy must wait, Kuwaiti crown prince tells U.S. senators

KUWAIT (Agencies) — Kuwait's crown prince and prime minister told visiting U.S. senators Saturday that democracy would have to wait until security was restored and the country ravaged by Iraqi invasion was rebuilt.

Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah said moving Kuwait towards greater democracy was an "obligation and commitment."

But he told a 17-member Senate delegation making a one-day visit to Kuwait that the government's "first priority is the security situation."

"Then after comes the reconstruction and rebuilding of our country. Then comes work in the political field."

Many Kuwaitis, especially those who endured the seven-month Iraqi occupation while the government of the ruling Al Sabah family was in exile in Saudi Arabia, have demanded a rapid move toward parliamentary elections with an enlarged franchise.

The emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah dissolved parliament and curbed press freedom in 1986 after a series of guerrilla attacks amid the Iran-Iraq war.

The government has refused to set a date for election.

Republican Senator John Warner of Virginia told the crown prince: "We hope you'll study freedom and that greater individual freedom will be given to Kuwaiti citizens."

The crown prince told the senators: "Maybe you have listened to voices here and there and these do not represent the majority of the Kuwaiti people. Our people live in brotherhood and cooperation and fraternity."

Sen. Dennis DeConcini asked the crown prince if he was ready to recognise Israel.

The crown prince said, "The Arab countries too want peace and security." But he added that Israel should "first express a willingness to... put an end to the persecution (of Palestinians) on the West Bank."

Sen. Joseph Lieberman gave the crown prince a letter signed by 85 senators appealing to Kuwait to eliminate the "secondary boycott" of Israel under which some Arab countries refuse to do business with companies operating in the Jewish state.

The crown prince said the boycott was a decision of the 21-state Arab League and "no single Arab country can take an independent action."

"I am sure many of the Arab countries are ready now to reconsider this matter," he said.

The crown prince also told the delegation that the six nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council were working on a joint security plan for the region. But he said "with all this cooperation we still need the help and cooperation of our friends in the United States."

The senators on the trip were: Wendell Ford, John Glenn, Max

Baucus, Howell Heflin, Frank Lautenberg, John Kerry, Strom Thurmond, John Chafee, Malcolm Wallop, Don Nickles, John McCain, Dan Coats, Conrad Burns, as well as DeConcini, Lieberman and Warner.

The United States contributed by far the largest force to the Western-Arab anti-Iraq coalition and has made clear it did not wish to restore an undemocratic system.

Sheikh Saad told Mr. Warner: "Maybe you have listened to voices here and there and these people do not represent the majority of the Kuwaiti people... our society is not divided into ruler and ruled people."

The senators earlier flew by helicopter to the Iraqi border town of Safwan, where they met troops and were briefed on the state of a rebellion in the nearby city of Basra and elsewhere.

Mr. Warner said United States should not allow itself to be drawn into the fighting inside Iraq.

"They've got a civil war going over here in Iraq, and that's their problem. I hope you don't have to get involved. You've done your job, it's time to pack up and go home," he told soldiers.

Ohio Democratic Senator John Glenn, asked if he feared U.S. forces could be pulled into the Iraqi fighting, said: "I suppose it's theoretically possible, but only if it spilled over into our area, and where Americans are being endangered."

Unknown attackers raiding Kuwaiti checkpoints

KUWAIT (R) — Unknown raiders are staging hit-and-run attacks against checkpoints manned by Kuwaiti soldiers and militiamen, a government minister said Sunday.

Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Abdul Rahim Al Awadi told reporters there had been several Kuwaiti casualties from the nightly shootings which began soon after Kuwait was liberated two weeks ago. He gave no figures.

"There are still people within certain areas who are having some skirmishes with the people," he said.

"There have been Kuwaiti casualties. I can't tell you the number. Unfortunately with people coming at checkpoints, firing at checkpoints. With half a million weapons around, you expect some casualties."

Security sources said that in one incident, four women had driven up to a checkpoint outside the police station in the Jabriyah residential district of Kuwait City at night and opened fire on militiamen.

Mr. Awadi said: "A lot of firing occurs every night. So many people have weapons. It varies from celebration and having fun to other things."

Electricity still three weeks away, Kuwaitis restless

KUWAIT CITY (AP) — The government said Saturday it could still be three weeks before water and electricity are restored to Kuwaitis who have grown increasingly frustrated with delays and broken promises.

Electricity and Water Minister Hamud Abdullah Al Ruqba announced the new schedule to a news conference and said he had been too optimistic last week when he promised power would be restored by March 24.

Both ordinary Kuwaitis and some leading citizens complained the government was not doing enough to return normal life for the people.

Workers at the Bayan Palace, which is being prepared for Kuwait's emir, complained that a two-million gallon reservoir has been filled with water drawn from the city's supply.

"People are disgusted with the government," said Faisal Al Marazook, a banker and former journalist who was part of the resistance movement during the Iraqi occupation.

"I see the houses of (government) ministers lit. Why not take the generators from the ministers and put them in the (food) co-operatives?" he said.

At his news conference Mr. Ruqba said sabotage to Kuwait's five main power plants was done in a very sophisticated way.

"Engineers put bombs in the most crucial and most sensitive parts of our power stations," he said.

Three foreign contractors, two American and one Saudi Arabian, are trying to restore 90 kilometres overhead cables that have been cut in 202 places, the minister said.

"I can spend as much (money) as I can to finish the job in the shortest time," said Mr. Ruqba. "I can assure you that before

three weeks, things will be almost to normal."

The minister said the country was getting by on as little as 15 million gallons of water each day distributed by trucks, as compared to 10 times that before the war. He noted that less than half the two million people living in the country before the war were still here.

Some neighbourhoods, particularly poorer ones populated by non-Kuwaitis, say those with connections have been getting regular food and water rations while other have done without.

At the Bayan Palace, one of several residences used by Emir Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, workers said Saturday they have filled a two-million gallon reservoir on the grounds, drawing water from the city's supplies. The emir returned Thursday to Kuwait from exile in Saudi Arabia and is living in a private villa while workers repair extensive damage.

"It's hard to justify this when you see people waiting in line for water and food," said one worker, who requested anonymity.

Mr. Marazook said Kuwaitis were extremely resourceful during the Iraqi occupation, efficiently distributed food, money and medical supplies.

But now, food rations on the back of trucks because it has not been delivered in time to the neighbourhood co-operatives.

Ahmad Murad, a Kuwait Oil Company executive who was active in the resistance, said, "We have a right to be angry. We gave the government (in exile) precise information three months ago on what they should be prepared for and they did nothing."

However, Mr. Ruqba said much of the sabotage was done Feb. 24, only three days before the U.S.-led coalition entered the emirate.

U.S. troops to remain in Gulf beyond July

DHAHRAN, (R) — American troops will still be in the Gulf in July and more soldiers are arriving to replace some of those who have left, U.S. Army Secretary Michael Stone said on Sunday.

Mr. Stone told reporters in Dhahran that the withdrawal of up to half a million U.S. soldiers, sailors and airmen and women would go ahead as quickly as possible but a definite timetable had yet to be worked out.

French Defence Minister Pierre Joxe said Saturday that turmoil in Iraq was preventing allied forces making the Gulf war ceasefire official and setting a date for a withdrawal.

"One can consider that the page has not yet been turned," Mr. Joxe told French Television during a visit to French army engineers digging out mines on Kuwait City beaches.

He said uncertainty over the situation in Iraq had prevented the signing of a full official ceasefire.

Mr. Stone refused to comment on the movement of U.S. forces in southwest Iraq, a large section of which is held by allied troops.

When asked whether U.S. troops could all be home by July 4, American independence day, Mr. Stone replied.

"I don't think we're going to have everybody out by then... I think there will be a need to have U.S. army forces here beyond July 4," he said.

"There are still new units coming from the United States to

replace units that are here that are going home or where there is a different requirement," he said.

"We can continue the rotation if we see that there is a need for forces here beyond July 4 or whatever date you want to suggest," he added.

"Mr. Stone said preparation of heavy equipment for transport back to the United States and the need to clear unexploded mines and bombs from the battlefield would slow down the withdrawal.

U.S. Defence Secretary Dick Cheney, Secretary of State James Baker and ultimately President George Bush would decide on how swiftly the withdrawal went ahead and whether there would be a permanent U.S. military presence in the Gulf, he said.

"That is being negotiated... I have no view as to whether there will be a permanent presence here but it is an option that could be discussed," he said.

"The soldiers have done their part in this action and we want to get them home as quickly as possible... but there are political elements involved which are not my responsibility," he said.

Mr. Stone said the number of U.S. army troops in the Gulf had dropped to around 295,000 from a peak of 505,000 during the war.

He said there would be an acceleration in the numbers of U.S. forces leaving the Gulf over the next three months but the numbers of specialists, such as those involved in clearing unexploded bombs and mines, may be increased.

Partial text of Saddam's speech

BAGHDAD (R) — Following is a partial text of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's speech broadcast on radio and television Saturday:

Bands of malicious traitors infiltrated from abroad carrying forged Iraqi identities to carry out destruction, subversion and robbery in a number of southern Iraqi towns and villages. They were assisted in this by unruly elements who were astray in Basra, Amara, Nassiriya, Karbala, Najaf and Hilla.

These traitors attacked isolated army barracks and retreating army units, seized arms and equipment and started burning the people's property and robbing schools, hospitals and houses and assaulting people.

Treacherously, they started killing some state officials including military officers and others in those towns.

We had to take determined action to protect Iraq from this treacherous discord and restore security, stability and order.

We all feel bitterness... we did not expect neighbours with whom we have attempted to establish an honourable peace and open a new page of good neighbourliness... to allow their territory to be used as a launching pad for such harm and treachery against Iraq.

Iraq's enemies depicted what happened as a popular uprising against the regime and a serious attempt to change it.

No attempt to change the system of government in country at war with foreign forces... can call itself patriotic. Any change of patriotic nature can only take place when the people can ex-

press their will for from the influences of the foreigner's bayonets and policy.

We have to exercise strong will and determination to protect Iraq from this discord... and restore security, stability and order.

Those who claim they are seeking a change when part of dear Iraq is suffering from the mean strikes of foreigners allied in a 30-state coalition... are not patriots.

They are foreign agents inspired by treachery, hatred, selfishness and untruthfulness...

We ought to imagine the dark fate of our country and people had those criminals succeeded in controlling its destiny.

People in the towns and villages subjected to these evil deeds are best placed to judge those... traitors who raised the slogans of sectarian discord and partitioning the country.

Does patriotism and democracy provide for Iraq to be partitioned into sects fighting each other over government positions and high posts? Does patriotism and democracy provide for a united Iraq to be fragmented like Lebanon?

Fragmenting Iraq is a treason. It means entering a dark tunnel, similar to that which Lebanon entered or even worse.

Those saboteurs are advocating a way for foreigners to tamper with Iraq, dominate it and foil its hopes.

Iraqis whose conscience is not dead know that we have sought reconstruction, progress and prosperity for all the country.

Despite the difficult situation after the (allied) aggression and the losses and sacrifices suffered

by the army, the best of our people, of the army and the security forces were able within a few days to crush this hateful discord.

Many traitors have been smashed and many have fled back where they came from.

At the same time as seditious bands entered a number of our cities in the south from across the border, armed elements from the same place entered a number of villages and towns in the north. Both raised slogans of sectarian division and committed acts of terrorism, subversion, revenge, murder and burning.

We have crushed the disturbances in the cities of the south... with the determination of the people and the cooperation of good, sincere people all over Iraq we can pluck out what is left of the roots of treason and sabotage.

We received the blow as we began to achieve a new state of work for the nation.

Our decision to build a democratic society on the constitution, the rule of law and political pluralism is a decisive, irrevocable decision.

Dear Iraqis, it is time to start building the pillar of the new faith in spite of all the difficulties.

President Saddam addressed much of his speech to the Kurds, denying they were downtrodden. He said the revolt in the north was fomented by the same people who backed an unsuccessful 1970-75 bid to create an independent Kurdish state.

They are repeating the same fatal error and the same treachery... their fate will be the same as those before.

I warn these reckless adventur-



Saddam Hussein

ers in the name of the Iraqi leadership. I tell them: "Do not have illusions because Iraq, despite the losses caused by aggression, will with God's help be able to deal... with those who exploit the country's plight."

Our Kurdish people must remember basic facts. What those adventurers and traitors seek will never be achieved... Kurds are present in even larger numbers in Turkey, Iran, Syria and the Soviet Union. These countries will not allow it.

We will never fall into the state that our enemies want... we are determined to rebuild the country with the help of God.

The Palestinian cause was and still is the reason for instability in the region because it has not been solved.

A solution that does not recognise the full rights of this struggling people will be no solution. Wise men should recognise this fact if they seek security, stability and a permanent peace in the region.

Saudi Arabia still wary of relations with Iran

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia and Iran have hit an old stumbling block over diplomatic ties since the Gulf war overturned the balance of power in the area, Iranian political sources say.

Tehran-based diplomats say the continued lack of normal links between what are now the two main military powers in the region does not bode well for a lasting regional security plan.

The sources, who are close to Tehran's negotiating team and declined to be identified, said

hopes of a possible compromise had been raised last month at a meeting between the countries' foreign ministers in Geneva.

But in talks since the Gulf war ended on Feb. 28, Riyadh had become firm again that Tehran must not try to set conditions for Iranians to attend the annual pilgrimage to the Saudi cities of Mecca and Medina, they said.

Relations soured after over 400 pilgrims, most of them Iranian, died in riots after a political demonstration in the Holy City of

Mecca in 1987.

A bitter political and ideological fight between Shi'ite Muslim Iran and Sunni Muslim Saudi Arabia led Riyadh to cut diplomatic ties the following year.

Tehran has boycotted the Haj since then, refusing to accept a Saudi ban on political demonstrations and imposition of pilgrim quotas which would cut the number of Iranians to 45,000.

The quotas were endorsed by foreign ministers of the 46-member Organisation of Islamic

Conference.

Iran's ambassador to Bahrain, Javad Torkabadi, still held out hopes of a compromise Tuesday, saying Iran was demanding 150,000 Iranians be allowed to perform the Haj but Tehran and Riyadh "might agree on the number of pilgrims that satisfies both parties."

Iran believes the Arab coalition partners feel they can keep Iran in a marginal security role now they do not need to balance Iraqi power, diplomats said.

U.S. soldiers say Ramadan won't effect them much

DHAHRAN (R) — American soldiers in Saudi Arabia say they are not avoiding offending Muslims during the fasting month of Ramadan will not affect them much because they can still eat, drink or smoke on their own bases.

Several soldiers interviewed in Dhahran Sunday, the first day of Ramadan, said they had been ordered to comply with daylight fasting rules when in public but could follow their normal routines within U.S. compounds.

"I don't think it's going to affect us much. This is pretty much our compound and U.S. rules apply... they are going to allow us to eat on base," army serviceman John Hiatt, 23, from Duluth, Minnesota, told Reuters.

"It hasn't affected us yet and I don't think it will much because we can't go into town anyway," said specialist Sean Weiss, 25, from Indianapolis.

U.S. military officials said Saturday that up to half a million American soldiers in the country had been barred from eating, drinking, smoking or playing music in public during the holy month.

Most of the Western soldiers in the coalition have been restricted to their bases since they arrived last August to avoid upsetting Saudis with their more liberal habits.

Alcoholic beverages are banned in the kingdom.

Working hours are shortened. In Saudi Arabia government offices will be open only between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Specialist Linda Ricketts, 38, from Knightstown, Indiana, said U.S. servicemen would be more affected by the holy month.

"We're not allowed to talk to

Saudis anymore. Normally I like to be friendly... but they (Saudis) told me they're only allowed to talk about God during the day," she said.

"So I won't talk to them unless they talk to me... I'll just wave," she said.

Ricketts and other soldiers at the airbase said they had not been told to avoid eating or drinking in front of the handful of Saudis and other Muslims they shared it with.

Lieutenant-Colonel Virginia Pribyl, spokesman for the U.S. military in Riyadh, explained that the rules for American soldiers would vary depending on the number of Muslims around.

Desert airbases shared with large numbers of Arab soldiers would take much greater care not to offend their hosts, she said.

"It's being dealt with on a unit by unit basis depending on the number of people around," she said.

"The intent is not to flagrantly offend Muslims in their own country during a very religious time for them. They (U.S. troops) are expected not to break the ban in front of large numbers of Muslims they're not normally in contact with," she said.

"Basically its business as usual but we're going to accommodate their customs like we do all different religions," said Captain Thea Bibbs, 38, from Henderson, Kentucky.

One U.S. military officer who did not want to be named expressed surprise when told that muffled cannon booms fired in eastern Saudi Arabia on Saturday night signalled the start of a holy fasting month.

"No kidding," he said.

Egypt misses out on first round of Kuwait contracts

CAIRO (R) — Egypt's hopes are fading for a major share of contracts to rebuild Kuwait as a reward for sending troops to the U.S.-led alliance against Iraq.

Egyptian businessmen just back from a fact-finding trip to the emirate say they have won only one small contract to renovate one of the emir's palaces as part of an initial 90-day emergency plan to restore normal life to the emirate.

And they warn that if the government does not move quickly, Egypt could lose out on the second reconstruction phase as well.

"Kuwaiti officials told us: Thank you but no thank you. You came too late," said one businessman who went to Kuwait.

Egypt only contacted the Kuwaiti government last week to offer its services. The Americans have landed the lion's share of contracts in the first emergency reconstruction phase, with others going to Saudi, British and Kuwaiti companies.

Officials advised Egypt's Housing Minister Hassaballah Kafrawi, who headed the delegation of builders, consultants, engineers and port officials, to seek sub-contracts from U.S. and European firms for the second phase.

They said their best chance would be to cooperate with Kuwaiti companies, many of which lack personnel and equipment.

Businessmen complain that the government was too lethargic and apparently too shy to approach the Kuwaitis until they prodded it.

Hussein Sabour, owner of a private sector consultancy firm and one of those who visited Kuwait, said private companies had already contacted U.S. and European firms for the next phase.

If we don't, Egypt will also lose out on the second phase... especially as damage in Kuwait is not as huge as the delegation expected, except in the petroleum sector," Mr. Sabour told Reuters.

With reports that Kuwait has promised the United States 70 per cent of contracts, the businessman say Egypt would be more than lucky to get third of the balance.

They said Egypt only won the palace contract on the last day of the delegation's visit.

"If it got the agreement... after meeting the Kuwaiti crown prince who noticed that Egypt was not helping in any way in the reconstruction process, and told the minister to appoint some companies to renovate the palace," said one businessman.

He said the contract was not expected to be worth much as the complex, though luxurious, was little damaged and would take no more than 12 days to repair.

Samir Aalam, chairman of the state-owned Nasr General Contracting Company, has sent staff to Kuwait to start work. He would not say how much the palace contract was worth.

Apart from the palace job, Egypt will be providing doctors, medicines and drivers as part of the emergency plan to restore life to the emirate.

Yugoslavia

(Continued from page 1)

"It has never been this bad," one Western diplomat said. "Events are moving so quickly now that they are slipping out of the hands of those who think they can control them."

The army, an unfathomable factor in the political equation, denied media reports it was split over whether to impose a security clampdown in response to anti-communist protests in Belgrade.

"Army leaders are, as they have always been, totally united,

both when estimating the country's difficult situation and when considering the measures to be taken in this connection," it said in a rare statement carried by Tanjug news agency.

Vuk Draskovic, leader of the nationalist Serbian Renewal Movement which spearheaded the Belgrade protests, told a Spanish newspaper he considered a military crackdown unlikely.

But tensions remained high and Mr. Draskovic told the Croatian daily Vjesnik that Mr. Milosevic was attempting the "re-bolshevisation" of Yugoslavia.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

PRAYER TIMES

06:22 Fair
06:30 (Sunrise) Duha
11:44 Dhuhri
15:00 'Asr
17:09 Maghrib
19:05 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedish Tel. 510740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terzian Church Tel. 623366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 623383, Tel.

625543, Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751.
Assam International Church Tel. 615326.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 615017, 654922.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

The country will be under the effect of unstable weather conditions Monday. Temperatures will drop and clouds will increase gradually and scattered showers of rain are expected.

Winds will be southwesterly moderate, freshening at times. In Aqaba, winds will be southerly moderate and some rough.

Min./max. temp.
Amman 10 / 20
Aqaba 16 / 27
Dhahran 8 / 22
Jordan Valley 15 / 26

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 26, Aqaba 31. Humidity readings: Amman 33 per cent, Aqaba 24 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Issam Al Asmar 790504

Dr. Fayez Jallouja 624307
Dr. Anwar Al Haj 771020
Dr. Mohammad Al Sawwa 753056
Firdous pharmacy 661912
Firdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 637085
Nasrallah pharmacy 625672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yaacoub pharmacy 644945
Shocoua pharmacy 637660

Relief officials fear measures against foreign workers in Iraq

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — International relief officials are anxiously scanning the Iraqi situation with apprehension that the economic devastation caused by the war could lead to a massive expulsion of foreign workers, particularly Egyptian nationals.

"We do not have any indication so far that such a move could happen in the immediate future," said the head of an international agency in Amman. "But we are indeed worried, particularly after the recent imposition of visa requirements for Jordanians to enter Iraq," he told the Jordan Times. The visa requirement for Jordanians, he said, could be the forerunner of an Iraqi crackdown on foreign workers.

In Baghdad itself there is little sign of any move by the authorities to expel foreign workers to make room for Iraqis who have lost their jobs in industries, refineries, phosphate plants and other sectors as a result of the devastation caused by 40 days of allied bombing.

But that does not mean that the government would not be reassessing the situation once the dust of war settles down, warns the relief official.

"It is a very normal phenomenon, in every situation similar to that in Iraq, that the host government has to oust foreign workers to accommodate its own

national," he noted. "There is no reason at this point to believe that this would not happen in Iraq."

"We hope this doesn't happen but are keeping a very close watch," he added.

The Iraqi move to introduce prior visa requirements for Jordanians to enter the country was explained by Iraqi officials as prompted by security concerns. But relief officials interpret it as a sign of an Iraqi desire to stem the flow of unemployed Jordanians to the country to take up jobs.

"It is a paradox," noted the relief official, who preferred anonymity. "However, we have come to expect paradoxes in every situation."

For relief agencies at stake is the possibility that as many as 600,000 to 800,000 Egyptians of the 900,000-strong Egyptian community could be forced out of Iraq. According to some accounts, about 100,000 of them are permanent residents of Iraq after marrying Iraqi women. This makes them immune to any expulsion order.

The first move to reduce the number of foreign workers in Iraq could come in the form of an order for everyone to regularise his or her stay with residence permits, a labour expert said.

"This would help the government ask those 'illegals' to leave the country," he explained. "Despite repeated campaigns in the past, it remains true that many

foreign workers in Iraq do not have the necessary permits issued by the government."

The pre-crisis Egyptian community in Iraq numbered around 1.6 million. Over half a million of them have left the country through Jordan. Many others are serving in the Iraqi army but with the demobilisation of the armed forces they also might themselves end up out of job.

Egyptians are very much part of life in Baghdad. They work in restaurants, supermarkets, groceries and also in the domestic sector. But the return home of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi soldiers is believed to apply pressure on the unemployment market, adding to the problems created by the crippling of the industrial and oil sectors.

The Iraqi Interior Ministry is not issuing any reentry visas to foreign workers. This has prompted many expatriates to continue to hang on in the country, particularly their savings over the years are in Iraqi dinars in bank deposits.

"If I leave now, I lose everything," said an Asian who works at a now inoperative five-star hotel in Baghdad. "I have worked here for the past five years and my savings since February 1990 are in an Iraqi bank awaiting foreign exchange clearance to be transferred home," he said.

Judging from the state of things in Baghdad, it is a very distant prospect.

King receives Ramadan greetings

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday received cables from a number of Arab leaders congratulating him on the beginning of the fasting month of Ramadan and wishing him continued good health and happiness, and the Arab and Muslim World every success and happiness.

The cables were sent by Sultan Qaboos Ben Said of Oman, King Hassan II of Morocco, Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, Yemeni President Ali Abdullah

Saleh, Tunisian President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, United Arab Emirates (UAE) President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan and UAE Vice-President Maktoum Ben Rashed Al Maktoum.

The King also received similar cables from Turkish President Turgut Ozal, President of the Maldives Maamoun Abdul Qayyum and President of Chad Idris Dibi.

Humanitarian group sends relief supplies to Baghdad

AMMAN (J.T.) — Medecins du monde (doctors of the world), who operate through an office in Amman, Sunday sent a shipment of relief supplies to Baghdad and said more of the kind would be on the way on Tuesday.

A spokesman for the humanitarian group said that a refrigerated truck laden with 10 tonnes of medicine, two tonnes of children's milk as well as medical equipment needed for emergency work were sent in the company of three specialists, two administrators and one Jordanian doctor.

He said that the shipment was organised in cooperation with the Arab Emergency Health Committee which has been channelling medicine and food supplies to the Iraqi people from all over the world.

According to the spokesman, another shipment, of still unspecified amounts of supplies, will be leaving Amman Tuesday in the

company of at least one doctor to join the other staff in the Iraqi capital.

Together, the team members will not only be providing relief supplies to the hospitals and other relief centres, but they will also conduct an evaluation of the health situation and will carry out surveys to determine Iraq's needs of special medical care and the needs at children hospitals, said the spokesman.

The spokesman expected the head of "medecins du monde" office, Dr. Jaquet, to be back by Thursday when he would address a press conference here to give details about his impressions and the situation in the Iraqi capital and other cities.

The "medecins du monde" group opened its office in Amman during the Gulf crisis and its teams offered medical assistance to the foreign evacuees fleeing Iraq and Kuwait at Azraq clinics serving the evacuees camps.

Jordanian doctor appeals for medical aid for Baghdad hospitals

AMMAN (R) — A relief expert asked the world on Sunday to give Baghdad's needy hospitals food and medicines and help check epidemics in war-torn Iraq.

The plea was voiced by a senior Jordanian doctor returning from Iraq. Mohammad Al Hadid, vice-president of Jordan's Red Crescent Society — a main humanitarian window for Iraq — urged the world to offer all possible relief to help Iraqis deal with the aftermath of six-weeks of heavy allied bombing.

"Hospitals lack a lot of medicine, they need anaesthetic drugs, power generators, water, food for the sick and all other essentials to run a hospital," Mr. Hadid told Reuters after a visit to Baghdad with other western relief officials.

Iraq says typhoid, cholera and dysentery are spreading in the country and medical supplies are urgently needed.

Mr. Hadid said lack of diesel fuel for vehicles and allied bomb-

ing that cut almost all communications made statistics on casualties from war and epidemics difficult to get.

Mr. Hadid said a U.N. trade embargo imposed on Iraq after its Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait had halted almost all medical supplies to Iraq, which spent an average of \$700 million a year on such imports.

Mr. Hadid travelled to Iraq with officials from the American Save the Children Federation and Save the Children Fund, OXFAM, a charity organisation, and Care International — all based in Britain.

The Jordanian Red Crescent has sent to Iraq around 290 tonnes of food, baby milk and medicines donated locally or given by foreign agencies.

Michel Schroeder, spokesman for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Jordan said Sunday another Red Cross relief convoy would leave Amman for Baghdad on Tuesday.

Soviets

(Continued from page 1)

Moldavians beat up ethnic Russians and Ukrainians who tried to vote. The Moldavians, aided by police, blocked access to the seven polling stations set up by the Red Army, the Associated Press reported. No serious injuries were reported.

Mr. Gorbachev, smiling and declaring himself confident of victory as he voted, told reporters the issue was larger than his political future.

"It is the fate of the people, of hundreds of peoples, of such a great state, and if you will, the fate of civilisation," said the 60-

year-old Soviet leader. He has repeatedly tried to turn the referendum into an issue of patriotism, of preserving the motherland for which millions lost their lives.

Polls were open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Preliminary results would not be available before Monday.

The referendum, a lead-up to approval of a new union treaty that would delegate more power to the republics, asks, "Do you consider it necessary to preserve the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a renewed federation of equal, sovereign republics in which human rights and freedoms of any nationality (people of all ethnic groups) will be fully guaranteed?"

Memorandum says exports can be boosted if credit facilities are granted at reduced interest rates

Exporters ask banks to help by granting credit facilities

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian Exporters Society (JES) has sent a memorandum to the governor of the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) urging him to help exporters acquire further credit facilities from the local commercial banks to boost exports.

The memorandum, sent by the society President Samih Darwazah, said that what was required by the exporters was credit facilities at reduced interest rates, and a rescheduling of the exporters' debts to the banks.

He said in his note that the present interest rates were an obstacle in the path of trade. The memorandum gave details about the difficulties facing the Jordanian industrial sector, resulting from the Gulf crisis, and about the obstacles lying in the path of exports.

"Due to political reasons and to lack of means of land and air transport, the Jordanian exporters have failed to reach the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, which served as Jordan's biggest markets abroad,"

said the memorandum.

"Exporters of raw materials to Jordan, who used to send shipments and accepted delayed payments, insisted during the Gulf crisis to receive the payments in advance and in cash, something which also complicated matters for the exporters and the industrialists," said Mr. Darwazah in his memorandum.

Another businessman, Yahya Al Alami, told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that officials from the private and public sectors were trying hard to find new markets for Jordan's products abroad, notably in the Soviet Union, Iran and Libya as well as countries in Eastern Europe.

"It is hoped that these markets would absorb a great deal of Jordanian products which are of high quality and can compete with foreign goods," Mr. Alami said.

Mr. Alami who is managing director of the Industrial Commercial and Agricultural company, said that there was need to establish a bank to finance Jordan's exports and to offer exporters credit facilities. "Furthermore, Jordan should adopt measures to reduce to a minimum imports of certain goods that are being manufactured in the Kingdom," Mr. Alami added.

Mr. Alami said that there was urgent need for Jordan to export fruits and vegetables as well as industrial products.

Ali Dajani, a consultant at the Amman Chamber of Industry, suggested in a statement to Petra that a national plan for reactivating the national economy should be worked out.

He said that Jordan needed raw material for manufactured products that can be sold locally and abroad, and "therefore there is need for a system to control the imports of raw materials at the lowest possible cost, and in bulk, which is cheaper for industry."

Referring to exports, Mr. Dajani said that the climate was now ripe for Jordanian exporters to revive their contacts to ensure new markets for the industrial and agricultural products.

All seafront hotels in Aqaba are reported fully booked for Eid Al Fitr after complete inactivity during the Gulf crisis

Tourism seen gaining momentum after Gulf crisis

AQABA (J.T.) — As the holy month of Ramadan started in Jordan, Jordanian citizens were quick to make reservations at hotels in Aqaba for the coming Eid Al Fitr feast, expected around April 15, according to tour operators here.

They said that all the seafront hotels in Aqaba are fully booked, but there is still room at the remaining hotels in the winter resort city.

According to tourist offices, the city has 20 classified hotels and 11 unclassified ones which offer reasonable rates to Jordanians.

During the Gulf crisis tourism in Aqaba was reduced to zero as tourist groups from Scandinavia and other European countries, like Italy, Austria and Germany, cancelled their reservations.

Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national airline, had in previous years organised special flights

from Helsinki, in Finland, directly to Aqaba, whose hotels were always congested during the national holidays in Jordan.

Tourism officials here were quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as saying that reservations at the hotels were increasing at great speed, and "it would not be long before the city would be bustling again with activity."

Ministry of Tourism Secretary General Nasri Atallah said last week that his office was launching large scale campaigns in Jordan and abroad in a bid to revive the tourism industry in the Kingdom now that the Gulf war has ended and airlines are operating normally again.

Mr. Atallah said that immediate plans were being worked out entailing programmes to attract tourists from Europe, especially from Germany, Spain

and Scandinavian countries.

Mr. Atallah estimated Jordan's losses in tourism, during the crisis at \$250 million, but he said plans underway were bound to help revive the industry and help the country regain its former status.

Before the crisis, there were 6,500 hotel employees in Jordan, but due to poor business only a few more than 1,500 remained, while the rest have been laid off, according to tourism officials.

They said that hotels reported 350,000 bednights during the 1989 tourist season, dropping to zero in the last part of 1990.

According to Mr. Atallah, the Ministry of Tourism has prepared a programme which entails setting up exhibitions in May to display Jordanian artifacts and antiquities in Liverpool, and is studying the prospect of organising a similar exhibition in France within the next four months.

Palestinians pay heavy price for prolonged Israeli curfew

AMMAN (J.T.) — The imposition of a blanket curfew on the Israeli-held Arab territories during the last month is estimated to have cost the Arab population of the occupied territories \$15 million because the curfew, which lasted throughout the Gulf war, paralysed all economic activities and created social, educational and health problems for the Arab population, according to a report published here Sunday.

"During the past month, the Israeli authorities stepped up their repressive measures against the local population by virtually keeping all the Arabs imprisoned in their homes and cutting them off from the outside world," said the report issued by the Foreign Ministry Department of Palestinian Affairs.

The report said that the Israelis last month closed the two bridges across the Jordan River, pre-

vented workers from going to work and earning a living, they closed all schools and colleges, imprisoned 28 Arab journalists, confiscated nearly three million dunums of Arab owned land and, paved the way for building 20 additional Jewish settlements in the Arab territories, to raise the total number to 198.

The mass arrests, the collective punishment and the confiscation of land, said the report, did "great damage to the livelihood of 100,000 Arab families in the West Bank and Gaza Strip."

The report said the Israelis kept up their systematic rooting of hundreds of fruit trees, owned by Arabs, demolished 43 homes of Arab youths accused of joining the resistance and pursued campaigns to collect heavy taxes.

The report quoted the Israeli

human rights organisation "Bet Saleem" as saying that at least 3,647 Palestinians were detained, by the middle of the last month, and that the total number of detained Arabs, since the start of occupation, in 1967, has now risen to more than 75,000.

The report said that the curfew led to the suspension of essential services, like electricity and water, in many areas, and that the delay in the collection of garbage brought about the spread of diseases in a number of regions.

The report also drew attention to the deteriorating situation in Palestinian hospitals and health centres due to the serious shortage of medical equipment and medicine. This caused the death of many sick people whose conditions required medication on a daily basis.

ADC, Al Basira assail Western media coverage of regional events

By Serene Halasa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A meeting held Sunday by the Arab International Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) in Jordan, representatives from Al Basira group (a group of international women married to Jordanians), and representatives of the Jordanian media had as subject discussions regarding the "double standard, one sided coverage of events in the region, in particular the recent Gulf war."

"Most Western media people, don't tackle the Palestinian question, from our point of view," Nidal Sukhtian, president of the ADC said. "Sometimes the problem is never even mentioned in the media, unless it is in answer to certain criticism," Mr. Sukhtian said.

"There are many distorted images projected to countries and governments that play a big role in decision making concerning

this region," Dr. Zaki Ayyoub, a Jordanian businessman said. Dr. Ayyoub, was the person behind organising and suggesting the start of a committee that would tackle this problem.

"I was mad, angry and frustrated by what was going on," Dr. Ayyoub said. "For example the story of Dr. Sami Nuseibeh's arrest has virtually got no coverage in the Western media," he added.

Dr. Ayyoub's idea is to gather a group of people who are willing to channel all their efforts towards a certain number of Arab causes, primarily the Palestinian plight and the Iraqi crisis in the aftermath of the Gulf war, among others, and to take these causes to the world audience.

"I like a concentrated cannon, we shoot at one target with one message, and make sure that we get our message where we want," Dr. Ayyoub said, adding that this would be better than having a number of Arab intellectuals write on a wide range of topics.

"If we adopt certain issues, our

message would be clearer and more powerful," he reiterated.

The problem of misrepresentation is not only evident in the United States, Dr. Ayyoub said, but has also gone beyond it, spreading to the Western world.

The participants in the meeting also discussed ways in which this effort could reach the biggest number of people all over the world. The prevailing idea was writing articles in major papers, letters of appeal to world leaders and heads of organisations, communicating through music, films and cultural exchange.

Some also discussed founding headquarters for the committee with a library that would contain records, books and films to support the work of the committee.

The participants said that future meetings would discuss the issues to be tackled and the modes in which these issues would be carried to the outside world. During the meeting forms were distributed in order to get the biggest number of participants in this programme.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King concedes families

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday delegated Irbid governor to take part in the funeral of former senator and ex-minister Ali Al Hindawi who passed away early Sunday. King Hussein also delegated Amman governor to convey his condolences to Abu Nuwwar family over the death of Mr. Fayez Abu Nuwwar. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan delegated the director of Irbid Police Department to console Al Hindawi family and the director of his office to console Abu Nuwwar family.

Tafleeh officials meet

TAFLEEH (Petra) — Heads of the local municipal councils in Tafleeh Governorate discussed in a meeting held Sunday ways to activate the role of the municipal and rural councils in the governorate, the role of these councils as well as develop-

ing the role of women in contributing to the society. Acting Tafleeh Governor Khalid Al Bawaz stressed the need to promote cooperation between the municipal councils and Princess Basma Social Services Centre.


Ramadan programmes in Karak

KARAK (Petra) — The Araqat Department in Karak Governorate has prepared an extensive programme of religious lessons and sermons in the governorate's mosques during the holy month of Ramadan, according to the department's Director Zaher Al Shamaleh.

Italian rice arrives

AQABA (Petra) — A shipment of Italian rice has arrived at the port of Aqaba. The 1,813.5 tonne shipment, which is the third rice shipment from Italy, was presented by the Italian government to Jordan as a grant, bolstering good relations between Jordan and Italy.

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Hole in peace wall

U.S. SECRETARY of State James Baker has just concluded his working visits to several capitals in and outside the Middle East and some people expect him to enunciate a comprehensive peace plan for the Middle East soon. In fact news analysts privy to Baker's thinking are now talking loudly about the "imminent" pronouncement of a specific U.S. peace formula to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. No doubt Mr. Baker's consultations with leaders of the countries he visited have enabled him to put the pieces of some peace initiative together. But while the international community, especially the Arab World and Israel, waits to see what kind of thinking the Americans will come up with this time, the Arab side has yet to put its act together in preparation for anything that might come out of Washington. What should be a problem for us is that the principal Arab parties are not even on talking terms with one another.

The PLO's place in any negotiations is still a thorny issue with Washington. Tel Aviv and several Arab capitals opposed to the present leadership of the Palestinians as an interlocutor in any such talks. In Amman, on the other hand, the position is crystal clear: the PLO is an indispensable party to the negotiating process and its leadership is something for the Palestinians and them alone to determine. If the brokers for peace would choose now to raise questions about who should represent the Palestinians at a time when they have already spoke their word on it, then the peace process would get bogged down once again and enter a quagmire from which it may not extricate itself alive. Besides, the PLO has been recognised by the greater majority of the nations of the world as the sole representative of the Palestinian people and such international legitimacy cannot be taken away easily. The peace process should be concerned about issues of substance that will move the quest for peace in the Middle East towards something tangible and promising. If only the Arab parties to the conflict can speak with one tongue on this issue, then the other concerned capitals would find no fertile ground to pursue their wrong policies. The trouble is that there is very little, if any, communication between the Arab countries on how to respond to any new peace initiative from Washington. True, Mr. Baker has visited and consulted with Cairo, Damascus and the Gulf states to seek their ideas on his peace initiative, but such consultations are not near enough to commit the entire Arab World solidly behind any fresh peace formula.

Jordan was bypassed by Mr. Baker during his Middle East trip. At a time when the U.S., itself, Europe and nearly the whole world maintain that Jordan is central to the quest for peace in the area, neither Washington nor the other Arab countries allied to it saw fit to seek its point of view on the future of the region. This anomaly needs to be rectified, first by those Arab countries mentioned above and secondly by the U.S., the Soviet Union and Europe. Short of a global effort to reach peace, any attempt at sidestepping major players and skirting real issues will be doomed to failure.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i Arabic daily highlighted the mission of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan who arrived in England Saturday at the start of a tour of three countries to advocate Jordan's political stand in the post war era. The Crown Prince's mission is part of the Kingdom's ongoing efforts for peace and security; and his lectures in the United Kingdom, Canada and San Francisco are expected to focus on Jordan's views with regard to peace and security in the region, the paper noted in editorial Sunday. Needless to say that presenting Jordan's views at international forums and focusing world public opinion on the need to help this region to enjoy peace and stability is bound to have its beneficial effects not only on Jordan but the whole Arab area, the paper pointed out. Indeed, it said, the tour presents a good opportunity for Jordan to submit its views which are based on rationality and which have been oriented towards peace based on justice and the implementation of international legitimacy. It is high time for the decision-makers and the intellectuals in the West to realise the urgent need to opt for reason and to deal with issues in our reason with rationality and objectivity, so as to open the way for their nationals to contribute most effectively towards the re-establishment of peace, the paper added. The paper said that Jordan will continue to serve as a pillar for peace and an oasis for security and stability; and the Crown Prince's tour to advocate this view serves as one more link in a long chain of efforts to enhance the Kingdom's constructive role and a good chance to promote the cause of justice.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily says those who have been conspiring against Iraq from inside are not Arabs but foreign hostile elements who had mingled with the Iraqi people in a bid to sow seeds of sedition and dissension. Haider Mahmoud accuses those plotting to undermine Iraq's security of working hand in glove with the colonialist powers who destroyed Iraq's socio-economic structure and are intent on transforming the country into sheikhdoms, easy to control similar to the other mini-states in the Gulf region. The Iraqi president broke the silence Saturday, announcing the crushing of the plot in the south and shedding more light on the atrocities committed by the traitors which he said, were a continuation of the process of killing women and children started by the aggressors on Jan. 17, the writer notes. The president has promised to reveal further aspects of the conspiracy which was concocted in collusion with a neighbouring country, but he also promised his countrymen political pluralism and a new cabinet, parliament and constitution for Iraq, the writer continues. By crushing the revolt in the south, the Iraqi armed forces have proved capable of defending the homeland from its enemies from within as well as from outside, Mahmoud adds. He says those who pillaged homes, raped women, destroyed the economy and killed innocent civilians were element of evil which had to be uprooted from the midst of the nation.

Weekly Political Pulse

Time to bridge the Arab divide

THERE must be a beginning to the process of healing between the Arab countries that were caught on opposing sides of the fence during the Gulf crisis and the war that ensued from it. And what better place to make this beginning than between Amman, Damascus and Cairo as a prelude to a full-fledged inter-Arab cooperation and solidarity. Sooner or later the Arab capitals will once again go "back" to the "brotherly relations" that once reigned supreme in the Arab World. The sooner the healing among the Arab ranks begins the better it would be for both sides of the equation. If the Arab leaders do not entertain now such an urgent need to heal the wounds of the Gulf crisis, their peoples are not likely to sit idly and let Arab feuds persist for much longer. Even if Arab leaders can convince themselves that they live peacefully and comfortably and even less expensively without one another, the Arab peoples have enough vested interest in harmonious inter-Arab relations to make their weight be felt sooner or later.

On the surface of things, Amman-Damascus relations could be the first step on the road for full restoration of "normal" relations between the Arab capitals. It would be also the easiest to attain since the difference between them over the Gulf crisis was wisely contained throughout the crisis and the devastating war that followed it. It appears that such initial Jordanian-Syrian contacts are promising enough to justify further exploration on the road leading to the full restoration of complete brotherly relations between the two sisterly states. Besides, Damascus maintained and honoured its conditional agreement to the Arab stance against Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and had, therefore, refrained from joining the offensive battle that was waged against Iraq by

even some Arab armies. Syria's position towards the Gulf situation appeared a "principled one" even though Jordan and Syria did not see eye to eye on it. If Jordanian-Syrian relations can be accelerated and strengthened, there is a lot that can be constructed on its edifice. Once Damascus-Amman relations are consolidated they can be used as a launching pad to pursue the second stage in reconstructing complete Arab relations. Cairo cannot be too far away from this vision since it too appeals to aspire for normalisation of its relations with Jordan. Unfortunately, Cairo had hit Jordan many times below the belt due to their differences on the Kuwaiti conflict. At a time when Amman refrained from making personal attacks against the Egyptian leadership, Egypt felt otherwise and expressed its differences with Jordan in a highly personalised fashion. This is the part that would impede most, the swift restoration of friendship between the two countries. There is great deal that Syria can do in this vein to put Egyptian-Jordanian relations once again on the right track. And one can see already such recovery in relations between Cairo and Amman in the course of the next few months and definitely before the end of the year. Once Amman-Cairo relations reach an acceptable plateau, then the ultimate drive to heal the wounds with the Gulf states can begin, granted this is a big order as things appear now. The picture for Jordanian-Gulf relations indeed looks bleak at this stage, but there is no reason to believe that it will continue to be so for ever. Once the Gulf leadership accept the thesis, that Jordan acted on the Gulf crisis in good faith and with deep conviction that war was unnecessary to realise an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, then a positive beginning can be established and a bridgehead constructed on which the rest of the

inter-Arab healing process can be pursued.

One of the most outstanding things about His Majesty King Hussein is his big heart which enables to let bygones be gone. This positive profile of the King has been demonstrated time and again in the past, even in the darkest hours in contemporary Arab history. There is every reason to believe that the King will not keep one stone unturned in his effort to stop Arab bleeding and restore normalcy between Arab capitals.

Such an optimistic scenario for improved inter-Arab relations can never be complete without giving Iraq a place once again in the future Arab order. Iraq is a wounded Arab country that has also suffered a lot and continues to suffer. Castigation or ostracisation of Iraq for much longer can only prolong the agony and suffering of the Iraqi people who were also caught by the webs of the Gulf crisis without really wanting to. The preservation of the territorial integrity and independence of Iraq is a responsibility that rests on the shoulders of all the Arab states. Spite and vengeance are never justification for the dismemberment of that Arab country or for compromising its independence. The healing process within the Arab World must necessarily include Iraq and the Iraqis. By this time next year, the relations between all the Arab capitals will be no doubt once again brotherly and firm. The Gulf crisis would be so much behind the Arabs by then that only its lessons can be remembered. As there were enough mistakes committed by so many Arab capitals over the Gulf crisis, there is hardly an Arab capital that can escape responsibility unscathed. The collective feeling of guilt should inspire all Arabs to be forgiving and humble in passing judgments on others.

By Waleed Sadi

Earth can meet all our needs but not our greeds

By HRH Crown Prince Hassan

The following is the text of an Address By His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Bin Talal delivered Sunday at Oxford University.

Ladies And Gentlemen,

THIS is my first visit abroad since the end of the Gulf war. I am, of course, deeply honoured to be invited to Oxford, which has served as an intellectual and moral bastion for centuries, a place where knowledge and learning are celebrated, and lasting moral values imbued in successive generations of men and women. That is why I felt Oxford to be an appropriate venue for this sobering message from my homeland.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the references to human rights in the United Nations Charter are quite substantive. It was for this purpose, that international legislation was drawn up and specialised agencies created. Thus, in 1948, the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights was explicit about food as a human right. The Declaration called for "freedom from want." Article 25 of the charter said: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for their health and well being including food, clothing and medical care."

The International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1966 elaborated on the theme of food as a basic human right. The Convention called for an equitable distribution of world food supplies in relation to need.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The real dimensions of the Gulf crisis were not merely economic or political but humanitarian. Wars are all about people, and people are inevitably victimised by war. It is sad that national leaders and policy-makers often tend to talk about crises as though politics can be conducted in a sanitised atmosphere devoid of the "people fac-

tor."

While the Gulf crisis has created widespread economic and social problems in the Middle East, Jordan is specially victimised. Jordan is no stranger to war or conflict. Arab-Israeli wars represent two major demographic Palestinian upheavals in 1948 and 1967, directly and dramatically affecting Jordan.

United Nations statistics show that there are 900,000 registered Palestinian refugees in Jordan today. Not only did Jordan's overall population increase significantly following the conflicts of 1948 and 1967, but there has been a continuous influx of Palestinians into Jordan, as a result of the continued Israeli occupation.

Despite the formidable burdens placed on our fragile economy and fledgling democracy by these demographic influxes, Jordan has succeeded in providing its population with exemplary levels of nutrition, health, education and social-welfare. Whilst meeting this economic challenge, Jordan was an economic "development achiever" in the Third World.

As with other developing countries, Jordan suffered economic setbacks in the late 1980s as world prices for our commodities plunged. But just as Jordan was successfully implementing its economic adjustment programme, the Gulf crisis erupted in August 1990. Our overall losses of our traditional trading partners in the Gulf were more than \$1.5 billion of our exports, transit trade, private remittances, debt repayments and official aid last year. This year, the figure could reach \$3.6 billion — or 77 per cent of the gross domestic product.

Because of the Gulf crisis, some 50,000 Jordanians lost their

jobs in Gulf states. This alone relegated thousands of families to instant poverty, because each Jordanian breadwinner supported an average of six family members. A representative of the United Nations secretary general assessed the Jordanian economy in late 1990 and reported that "Jordan is not the target of the embargo but it may be its greatest victim."

Jordan's economic problems have been compounded by a demographic movement from the Gulf, both of expatriates and evacuees. Large numbers of Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates — around a quarter of a million people — arrived in Jordan. Instead of the donors they once were, they have become needy recipients. The Jordanian government has spared no effort to assist them. The children were admitted into the already crowded Jordanian schools. At a time when the educational system (both the private and the public) is undergoing comprehensive reform, it has had to absorb an additional 57,000 entrants at the primary level alone. Such a massive and sudden increase in enrolment will undoubtedly have adverse effects on the educational system. Yemen has suffered in the same manner. Nicholas Van Hear of the Refugee Studies Programme, can inform you further on the destructive effects of the mass return of Yemeni workers. The Yemeni unemployment rate, already serious following unification, increased dramatically. Many Yemeni families, totally dependent on remittances from relatives in Saudi Arabia, are now destitute.

In addition to returning Jordanians and incoming Palestinians, my country was the focal point of another mass migration of third country nationals. Over 865,000 evacuees from India, Egypt, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Turkey, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and other countries trans-

sited through Jordan for periods of up to three weeks. This number of transients was equivalent to almost one-third of the Jordanian population. They urgently needed food, water, shelter and health care.

Quite frankly, we in Jordan were alarmed by the slow reaction of the international community to this influx. The arrival of evacuees continued round-the-clock for almost 62 days. Supplies of bread, cheese, vegetables, fruit and water were brought from the local market and supplied to the camps.

The Jordanian people and local organisations rushed to help. The government established a special unit in the Ministry of interior. We managed, with great difficulty, to look after these people until the media sensationalised their plight and international agencies finally came to our assistance.

The disparate nationalities and backgrounds of the evacuees, created particular problems. Dietary needs differed, and inter-ethnic tensions had to be managed. We encountered huge bureaucratic problems — international agencies and countries suddenly needed us to sign agreements before they could help, yet these agreements did not necessarily cover past expenses incurred by Jordan.

We also learnt that donor countries can actually use a crisis to dump agricultural surpluses with low nutritional value, or to supply food and medicines whose shelf life had either expired or was about to do so. Ideally, donors should provide food aid which corresponds to identified needs as well as to the dietary habits of the recipients. Food given to the needy must not be inferior to that consumed by the donor's own population.

The strain on the resources of the country of asylum can be severe — and Jordan has, through the years, found that hospitality carries a high price

indeed. Refugees and evacuees quickly reduce the scarce resources of the host country — land, water, food and services.

The ecological impact can destabilise local ecology, and deplete scarce vegetation. Severe strain is also placed on administrative structures, diverting resources and manpower from meeting the needs of local people. A central humanitarian need is the provision of adequate food. Food is an inalienable human right.

Summing up, the impact of the Gulf crisis has jeopardised Jordan's socio-economic achievements. The recent UNICEF report "Jordanian Children in the Eye of the Storm," reveals the effects on the Jordanian family, as malnutrition and illness threaten our children. Within this context, allow me to draw your attention to the WHO/UNICEF report concerning Iraq.

It states that "the ration of 750-1,000 calories available at present is less than half the daily requirement of a five-year old child, or less than one-third of the requirement of a pregnant woman. The only high-energy food source is dates. Cooking oil is unavailable on the open market. The official ration contains 7-10 grams of cooking fat per person per day. The quality of the foods now available on the market is low and deteriorating. Transport problems limit availability. In the near future the season for vegetable will be over. Storage is not possible."

There is a great deal of talk these days about the "New World Order." In a post-Gulf war era, any such "World Order" must include a global plan for better food distribution. "Food Security" must be a priority.

This entails creating and sustaining a political environment at the global level based on notions — and values — such as human solidarity and regional complementarity. A global food plan does not mean charity by the

donors.

It was in such a context in 1986, that the Arab Thought Forum held a joint workshop on food security in the Arab World and Africa, in cooperation with I.F.I.A.S., the Montpellier Centre and the Society of Third World Economists. The conclusions reverberate in my mind today. The Arab World imports the equivalent of \$25 billion worth of food annually, and expects this figure to double by the end of this century. This same sum of \$25 billion could provide a quantum jump in Arab/African self sufficiency in one year, if it were invested directly in the agricultural sector.

I participated in the work of the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues and recognise "that progress in removing the causes of human suffering is a step-by-step proposition." I know that food security is an "emotive subject" and more so in the context of "bread and gums." I recall and associate with the Brandt Commission's appeal for "arrangements to protect migrant workers and refugees." However, a New World Order is going to need more than "international development blatherers" like myself, if people really matter in the aftermath of yet another war.

World leaders, governments and international organisations, with their extensive bureaucracies and well developed expertise, must find the will to face up to the pressures and challenges of humanitarian causes. They must be made rigorously aware that flagrant violations of United Nations conventions and discriminatory punitive measures could undermine the very foundation of civilised society.

It was Mahatma Gandhi who said long before the Gulf crisis: "The earth can meet all our humanitarian needs but not its greed." It is no less true in today's troubled times.

A conference of security, cooperation for the Mediterranean

By Gianni De Michelis

MANY of the contradictions of our age are concentrated in the Mediterranean and the Middle East; a mind-boggling accumulation of weapons, population imbalances, outbreaks of cultural and religious intolerance, and the poverty in the Mediterranean belt standing in contrast to the wealth in the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula. It is difficult to redesign the equilibrium of a region which has not known stability since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The task will be all the more arduous now that the Gulf war is over.

Even with the war won, the peace might still be lost, making it still more difficult to reconcile all the political, economic and military contradiction in the area. Hence the need for a global approach, adopting the rationale that the Europeans have been following for two decades through the Conference on Security and Cooperation (CSCE). Which criteria can be transferred, appropriately adapted, to the other shore of the Mediterranean, to set in motion a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean and the Middle East (CSCM)?

First of all, a set of rules and principles should be codified, drawing largely on those set out in the United Nations documents on the Middle East. No regional system can be imposed from outside; the primary responsibility lies with those who belong to it, whether sovereign states or entities recognised by the U.N. Second, all the interested parties must be invited to join — from the western Mediterranean to Iran — without allowing negotiations to be held back, as was unfortunately the case with the conference on the Arab-Israeli conflict because of the mutual vetoes, if some countries decline the invitation.

The final criterion must be to phase in the process gradually, because we are conscious of the initial conditions, the hatred and the misunderstandings that hang over the Middle East. But at the end of the 1960s, the contrasts between the countries of Europe were no less acute, even though they were kept under control. We must therefore realise that the process is bound to be long, and must be implemented in stages. All the more reason to begin at once, immediately after the ceasefire.

The CSCM could follow the European pattern of the three distinct baskets: security, economic cooperation, and fundamental rights.

We could not entrust security to the permanent presence in the Middle East of western ground forces, or any kind of special alliance between the richer countries in the area and the United States. This would only end up by inciting resentment among the Arab countries.

What is needed is a regional security system, encouraging the establishment in the area of a real balance of power, underpinned by a strong legal basis and guaranteed by international support. As occurred in Europe, this balance of power will also require the involvement of the U.S., the Soviet Union, the European Mediterranean countries, and the EC itself, as well as a responsible policy for the transfer of military technologies from the more advanced countries.

Instability stems from the unequal distribution of prosperity, which is so easily manipulated for political purposes, that have led to a dramatic squandering of wealth.

It will be vital to implement a policy of solidarity for the economic development of the whole region, with the contribution not only of the countries of Europe but also the affluent Arab states.

In some countries, the political and social conditions do not always match their level of economic development; it will be all the harder to restore those conditions after such a bitter conflict.

Measures must be taken to prevent others from offering responses to the age-old demands of the Arab peoples which will be just as destructive as Saddam Hussein's. Rules of mutual tolerance and coexistence must be agreed, in an area which is a melting-pot of such diverse cultures, at the crossroads of the world's three great monotheistic religions.

The CSCM and the negotiations on the as-yet unresolved crises in Lebanon and Cyprus, and the Arab-Israeli conflict — which should be put at the top of the international diplomatic agenda — are not mutually exclusive, but complementary. By linking and timing these to connect with the general conference, it will be possible to undertake separate conferences to negotiate their solu-

tion. The CSCM will create more opportunities for dialogue which can revive the reconciliation process that stalled at Camp David. I am thinking of how significant the principle of acknowledging national borders in relations between Israel and its neighbours could be.

The criterion of participation that we have envisaged should produce concrete results from the outset. Access to the CSCM would be open to all parties who are willing to comply with a set of principles that would be a kind of entry ticket to the new club.

These principles might be summed up as follows: respect for the territorial integrity of states; the inviolability of the use of force in mutual relations; limiting the arms race by undertaking not to increase existing stockpiles and a commitment to non-proliferation; acceptance of minimum levels of mutual tolerance in the political and cultural spheres; and willingness to jointly marshal resources to foster the development of the less affluent countries.

The Italian government first launched the idea of the CSCM at the Paris Euro-Arab Conference in December, 1989. In the

framework of the CSCE, Italy and Spain put forward a joint plan at Palma de Mayorca on Sept. 24, 1990, which was debated on Oct. 10 in Rome at a conference of the countries on both sides of the western Mediterranean.

A more elaborated document was recently adopted in Lisbon by France, Italy, Portugal and Spain after these four countries had discussed the idea at a meeting held in Cairo in early December, where they were joined by Algeria, Egypt and Yugoslavia. Other European, Arab and Islamic countries have since indicated their support for the initiative. And now the Israeli government has declared its interest in the project.

If we want the postwar period to be genuinely new phase in world politics, we should not only be working towards these goals but we must speak out on them now, to prevent the new order that will emerge from such a serious conflict in the Gulf from being written in sand.

Gianni De Michelis is Italy's foreign minister and former president of the EC Council of Ministers. His article is reprinted from The Guardian.

Bush

(Continued from page 1)

East in November and went on to meet Syrian President Hafez Al Assad in Geneva without a stop-off in the Jewish state.

Since Mr. Baker's meetings last week with Israeli and Arab and Palestinian leaders, speculation has been rife in the Israeli media that Washington plans a fresh initiative to break the Arab-Israeli deadlock.

Mr. Katsav, considered close to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, was confident there were no surprises brewing in U.S. policy.

"To the best of the information we have, any new ideas will be coordinated with the United States and there will be no surprises regarding the state of Israel," he said.

Mr. Baker Saturday said he would soon make specific proposals to test the commitment of all sides to peace in the Middle East.

Speaking to reporters at the end of his 70-day mission to forge Middle East peace after the Gulf war he said he had ideas "to see whether or not stereotypes can be broken, old rigid and inflexible positions can be adjusted and compromised," he gave no details.

Israeli newspapers say that one of Mr. Baker's ideas is a regional conference on Middle East issues to be attended by Israel and Arab states, possibly under superpower auspices.

Israeli officials have said such a plan could be negotiable but Mr. Katsav said it had not yet been proposed.

"That idea was not raised (in cabinet) or by Baker. If it comes up there are a number of preconditions which will have to be met before we can turn to the main idea," he said.

"Who will be the parties, what will be the status of the superpowers, what will be the status of those superpowers (China and the Soviet Union) who do not have diplomatic relations with Israel, what will be on the agenda? Those are questions which will certainly arise if a regional conference is under discussion."

Although all sides to the Middle East conflict gave upbeat reports of their talks with Mr. Baker there was no immediate sign of any shift in basic positions.

Washington has repeatedly urged Israel to swap for peace at least some of the Arab territories it has occupied since the 1967 war. Israel has no less frequently refused.

The Jewish state also remains adamant in its refusal to give a role in peace talks to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Mr. Baker returned home Sunday after 10 days of intensive diplomacy without Soviet agreement on reducing nuclear and conventional arms but with hope for peace in the Mideast.

"There has been a significant change in the region, and that has presented us with an opportunity, I think, to act as a catalyst," Mr. Baker said in Moscow as he was ending his post-Gulf war trip to the Middle East and Soviet Union.

Mr. Baker stopped over in Turkey Saturday for talks with President Turgut Ozal, touching down hours after leftists claimed responsibility for a series of bomb explosions at buildings with U.S. links.

During his visit, Mr. Baker said the United States plans to let Turkey, the only NATO member bordering Iraq, keep the ground-to-air patriot missiles it provided during the Gulf crisis.

Mr. Baker arrived back in the United States early Sunday.

He was expected to decide soon whether to return to the Middle East to set the stage for the possible Bush trip to the region in April.

Iraq

(Continued from page 1)

National Assembly would meet in a special session Wednesday. The agenda was not announced for the meeting of the parliament, called one day after President Saddam promised major political reforms.

The radio also said Izzat Ibrahim, the deputy chairman of the ruling Revolutionary Command Council, met with army commanders in northern Tammuz province.

It referred to him for the first time as the deputy commander of the armed forces but did not indicate if that signalled changes in the command of Iraq's army.

Rebel leaders in Damascus claimed that fighting was still raging across the country. Jalal Talabani, leader of the umbrella Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, said in Damascus that Ayatollah Abul Kasem Al Khoei issued a religious edict in the southern Shiite holy city of Najaf sanctioning a jihad against the government.

Jawad Mohammad Al Malki, a spokesman for the Shiite Muslim fundamentalist Al Dawa party in Damascus, claimed Iraq had used

napalm in the south.

Bayan Jabr, a rebel spokesman, told reporters in Damascus that a captured Iraqi officer claimed three high-ranking Iraqi officials were killed in the allied bombing of a Baghdad air raid shelter last month.

However, all the officials named by Jabr, except for General Abdul Jabbar Sabahsal, the minister of state for military affairs, have been seen alive since the bombing of the shelter that allied commanders claimed was a command bunker.

Syrian Radio, quoting reports from inside Iraq, said some rebels were about 20 kilometres from Baghdad and preparing to march on the city. It spoke of "all out popular demonstrations" in Baghdad.

Iraqi opposition leaders in Beirut said rebels still held the holy cities of Karbala and Najaf.

The Iranian news agency IRNA, quoting refugees, reported fierce clashes between rebels and the elite Republican Guard in the southern cities of Zabair and Abu Al Khasib.

IRNA meanwhile, quoted President Hashemi Rafsanjani as saying Iraqis were becoming "disgusted over the massacre of the Iraqi people by the Republican Guards."

Mr. Rafsanjani told a group of religious officials that Iran should watch the situation in Iraq carefully, IRNA said. Iran has denied claims it is backing the Shiite Iraqi rebels.

Reporters for Iraqi newspapers reported Sunday that during a tour of Hilla and Karbala they saw the bodies of hundreds of people killed by rebels.

In Washington, Secretary of State James Baker said the U.S. government in the past 24 hours had refused a request by Iraq to use its fixed-wing aircraft for any reason.

"That's something that was agreed to at the very time operations were suspended," said Mr. Baker, who just returned from 10 days of intensive diplomacy in Europe and the Middle East. He made his remarks in an interview with the ABC broadcasting network.

The ban on Iraqi use of fixed-wing aircraft was part of an agreement between U.S. and Iraqi officials in reaching a ceasefire to end hostilities last month. Mr. Baker did not describe the circumstances or venue of the U.S. refusal.

Mr. Baker admitted that the prohibition had a "collateral effect" of hindering Baghdad from fighting rebels but insisted that the act was not to help topple President Saddam's government.

"We would like to see a change in that government... (but) we did not adopt that as a war aim," Mr. Baker said. He added that the coalition forces could have deposed the government if they had wanted to.

He said the demand was only to ensure security and the ceasefire agreement.

Asked if the United States was assisting the Iraqi rebels, Mr. Baker said only that the U.S. government was not providing them with arms.

U.S. and Iraqi military officers met Sunday to discuss Baghdad's request to use its warplanes inside Iraq.

Major-General Robert Johnston, chief of staff for the U.S. central command, represented the allied forces at the 1 p.m. (1000 GMT) meeting with ten Iraqi military officials at Safwan in occupied Iraq, a central command spokesman said.

The spokesman said the meeting was held in response to an Iraqi request to move around its military aircraft inside Iraq.

A Western military source told Reuters Iraq had been using attack helicopters to suppress the rebellion during the past two weeks.

"Resistance is crumbling faster in the south than the north due to the measures taken by the Iraqi army," the military source said. He said six to eight army divisions from Iraq's northern border were moved to suppress the Shiite rebellion.

Five hundred Iraqi prisoners of war returned home Sunday, bringing the total released so far to about 1,200.

In other developments: An Iranian opposition group said its forces engaged in fierce fighting with hundreds of Iranian Revolutionary Guards inside Iraq near the central border with Iran.

Iraq has called on the United Nations to lift an economic embargo imposed on it for occupying Kuwait, saying it had fulfilled its obligations in line with Security Council resolutions.

The Iraqi News Agency (INA) said Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz made the call Saturday during a meeting with U.N. Under-Secretary General Martti Ahtisaari, who was heading a 21-member humanitarian mission to Baghdad.

The foreign minister asserted that the extent of the destruction, which the visiting team saw during its field visits, demonstrated the facts resulting from the military operations against Iraq.

'Good' America sees world in black and white only

By Andrew Jones

The writer is a black American and a member of the Gulf Peace team currently in Amman. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

IT LOOKED BAD. It was bad. Last night the Jordanian Television broadcast the video again. It showed a man writing on the ground. Uniformed policemen were beating him with batons, bludgeoning him on the legs, the arms, the shoulders and about the head. Every now and then they would step on his face.

So the scene went, on and on and on.

Here in Amman, Jordan, the war has come to a conclusion hardly anyone wanted. The Iraqi army had been hampered from the air for over a month. Civilians were slaughtered by smart bombs (not smart enough to hit military targets) plus cruise missiles and an array of sophisticated electronic armaments. The ground war was over almost as soon as it began. Portions of Iraq became occupied territory.

The Palestinians in Iraq, Kuwait, Jordan and Israel had hoped for a final war with Israel. Palestinians rejoiced everything a Soud missile hit Tel Aviv, the West Bank or any part of Palestine. Smiles on the faces of Palestinians saw their enemy, Israel, take it on the chin, again and again and again.

But the bell for this round has tolled against them. American technology supplied early warning to Israel, giving them enough time to target incoming missiles and

shelter their population. Any catastrophe which might have drawn Israel into the war was averted. Iraq was left to slug it out alone.

The intifada has resumed. Stones have replaced Al Hussein missiles and Israelis are intercepting them with bullets. One Palestinian has been killed by Israeli police. A suspected collaborator, a woman, was killed.

The news on Jordan Television has become less compelling and more mundane. Politicians command the airwaves using terms like "Arab-Israeli conflict," "reconciliation," "cooperation" and so forth. Before and after the news, there is still classical music, but no more Russian war documentaries. The European detective shows are back with their brothers and sisters, the American sitcoms.

But this particular night, things were a little different. At first, I saw it in Arabic, the pictures of a man getting hit while he writhed on the ground. The pictures, I was sure, were coming from Israel. It was well known in the United States that the Israeli police often break the limbs of Palestinians and then send home as a message for their comrades. I took a closer look but could not see any uniforms. I thought it might be European police, possibly in Albania where thousands were fleeing a civil war.

As I kept watching, the video ended and the Mayor of Los Angeles, Tom Bradley, came on, a tall black man, former police chief and previous candidate for governor of California. I wondered what he

was doing on Jordanian television. I couldn't hear what he was saying because his words were drowned out by those of an Arabic translator. I presumed he was welcoming home soldiers from the war, another yellow ribbon ceremony, I thought. Once again, black people in America trying our best to get in on the back of the patriotic bandwagon.

Nevertheless, I was curious enough to watch the English news broadcast at ten o'clock. The report came on, and by the way it was impossible to tell his race just by looking at the video: a man was stopped by the California Highway Patrol outside Los Angeles, pulled from his car and beaten by several officers. They beat him so badly that it was reasonable to presume that they were going to kill him. Later, Tom Bradley came on to express his "outrage" at this act and to vow that "justice" would be served.

African-American soldiers, men and women, made up at least 45 per cent of the combined allied soldiers in the war with Iraq. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is a black man, although his star was overshadowed by Dick Cheney, a white. African-American drove tanks, fired artillery, flew jets, helicopters and served as riflemen. One of us even got his picture on the cover of Time magazine, cutting barbed wire in a training exercise. Another was captured and released by the Iraqis unharmed.

Looking at it objectively, we have served American overseas interests well, demonstrating as we did in Panama, Gre-

nada, Vietnam, Korea. World Wars I and II that we can be trusted to make an impact in combat. No doubt when it comes to making war for America, the black man can be counted on to do his share of killing. The question I ask, as an African-American, is whether that is something of which we should be proud.

During the time of previous wars, we could not eat, sleep nor live where we wanted to in America. We represent 10 per cent of the overall population and 80 per cent of the prison population. Our youth have suffered a 45 per cent unemployment rate for at least two decades now, and though they're rapping about it at the top of their lungs, few, if any, appear to want to listen.

George Bush himself was elected president against the wishes of 90 per cent of the African-American voting population which saw Jesse Jackson cheated out of the presidential and vice presidential nomination by the supposedly progressive Democrats. True, Jesse has his flaws, but I think everyone can agree that a willingness to slaughter Iraqi civilians isn't one of them.

Even worse than all of this is the fact that African-Americans have no idea what the Palestinian cause is about. It involves and why the Iraqi government linked it to their occupation of Kuwait. We don't know that the British created and now have recreated Kuwait in the same manner that they created Israel. We don't know that hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have black skins and kinky hair

just like we do, although I would defy anyone to show me one picture that has appeared in the American media depicting this fact.

We also don't know that at the very time we were marching in streets on behalf of Jews in America that they themselves were setting up a military political state that was systematically killing and removing those mentioned above. Yet ignorance is no excuse of the law and black Americans are not that ignorant anyway.

Since the 60's we have come to know the forces of American oppression and our own role within it. We know now that we have been used and abused in America, played with, if you will, like war toys. We know in Vietnam, that the Vietnamese weren't our enemy. As one Vietnam veteran put it: "No Viet Cong ever called me nigger". We even rioted in World War II because of segregation and unequal treatment in military policy.

At that time, for example, black men were not considered intelligent enough to fly, so special experiments were put into place to prove this. The best black graduates of black institutions were selected to receive flight training. Unfortunately they became the best pilots in the Army Air Corps. This was a well kept secret throughout the war and they were never allowed to command themselves. A white was always in charge.

My point is that there has been, and is probably will be, at least for several generations to come, a well thought out plan to keep the black man in the

dark long enough for him to serve the political military interests of America and its allies. That plan is well crafted, brilliantly executed and constantly honed to fit the contours of a changing international political terrain.

What's interesting to me here in Amman is that it is the same plan which created the refugee camps for Palestinians, camps that took too much the shotgun shanties in Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana. It is the same plan also that created the townships in South Africa where millions of people live in constant hunger for contact with their brothers and sisters to the north. It is the very same plan which traps many Arabs here in the Middle East into treating darker skinned servants like slaves while searching for anglo-featured mates for their sons and daughters.

So I watch the pictures on television, video taken at night with a home camcorder by a citizen in the United States who stood up for the opposition of truth. In the video, I saw a black man from the ghetto, a Palestinian in the camp, a Filipino, a Sri Lankan or Indian cooking in an Arab kitchen. I saw the degrading humiliation of the entire human species, carried out in the name of a plan called colonialism. I saw lighter brother killing darker brother over religion, all of us rushing towards the ultimate demise of this very brown and blue planet on which we live.

I saw it all just like you did, you who might read this. I saw a bit of myself in it. Peace and Justice Forever! Peace and Justice For All!

A lingering question — what did Glaspie tell Saddam?

By George Gedda
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — She was the first woman to rise through the ranks to become a U.S. ambassador to an Arab country. She enjoyed the esteem of her colleagues and could point to a long list of achievements.

Her entire world changed on Aug. 2 when, during a stopover in London, she turned on the television in her hotel room. The news was grim: Iraq had invaded Kuwait.

April Glaspie, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, was crestfallen. At a time of momentous change in the Gulf, she was away from her post, having left a day earlier for a visit to Washington via London. She has not been back to Iraq since.

Now, eight months later and the Gulf war over, there is growing interest in Washington as to just what happened in that crucial period leading up to the conquest of Kuwait, including the still-secret activities of the U.S. ambassador.

What instructions had she received from Washington? Why wasn't the State Department better informed about Iraq's intentions?

Opposition members of Congress are raising questions as to whether the crisis could have been averted in the first place.

Rep. Lee Hamilton, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East, says President George Bush's administration won't provide information.

"We have scores, if not hundreds, of questions to ask," Hamilton says.

Did Glaspie leave President Hussein with the impression that he could swallow up Kuwait without objections from Washington?

Now, after maintaining eight months of silence, officials said Glaspie is expected to give her version soon of her July 25 encounter with the Iraqi president.

Several U.S. officials said the Iraqi account of the meeting was "selective and incomplete." As the Iraqis described it, Glaspie told President Hussein that the United States "had no opinion on inter-Arab disputes, such as your border disagreement with Kuwait."

Seizing on that comment, Sen. Patrick Leahy has said that Glaspie, on instructions from the

State Department, "Virtually gave a green light to Saddam Hussein" to invade. Secretary of State James Baker calls any such interpretation "ludicrous."

There were other comments to the Iraqi president, according to the Iraqi transcript, that have raised questions about Glaspie's judgment. An example: "I admire your extraordinary effort to rebuild your country."

The United States sought to cultivate the Iraqi leader during much of the previous decade, seeing him as the principal obstacle to expansion of Iranian influence in the Gulf.

Given U.S. eagerness to build a relationship with him, some argue that the Iraqi leader may have felt an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait might have been a minor irritant at worst to his ties with

Washington. Indeed, Glaspie personified the policy of promoting cooperation with Baghdad.

It is not clear what forum Glaspie will choose to give her version of events. But officials here say she will assert that she left no doubt in Saddam Hussein's mind on the central issue at hand: that the United States would vigorously oppose any use of force by Iraq against Kuwait, an assertion that never made its way into the Iraqi transcript.

Since August, Glaspie, 48, has maintained the lowest of profiles, refusing interview requests even though she has been subjected to public ridicule because of her purported comments.

Officials say her good-soldier attitude should serve her well when she comes up for considera-

tion for a new assignment. She has been desk-bound at the State Department since last August. Until now, the administration has wanted to maintain the focus on accomplishing Bush's objective in the Gulf. It has shown interest in debating the roots of the conflict.

Acquaintances of Glaspie have expressed frustration over her unwillingness to confront the allegations against her. "Everybody wants to come out in her defense, but she won't let anybody" say one.

Some of her colleagues are angry with Baker and his aides for not saying more to spare Glaspie the ridicule she has suffered.

Said one: "It's a shame the administration didn't stand up more for her."

Democracy

(Continued from page 1)

In another move to ease tension and dampen widespread criticism of the government's failure to restore basic public services, the crown prince announced that a night-time curfew imposed on March 5 had been lifted during Ramadan.

Many Kuwaitis have grumbled over the lack of electricity, running water and food at the start of Ramadan.

Israelis

(Continued from page 1)

Entry to Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem was limited to workers registered with the government whose employers provided transport. Israel Radio said the army conducted strict security checks, including body searches, at city entrances.

A Palestinian from the Gaza Strip stabbed four Jewish women to death in West Jerusalem a week ago. Police found a second knife taped to his chest.

The army also allowed Palesti-

nian workers barred after last week's stabbings back into occupied Jerusalem.

Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis said Sunday a conference for security and cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM) seemed to be the best way to get Arab-Israeli peace talks moving.

"A CSCM type of idea... a Helsinki type of conference could be the element to bring together the various positions," he said.

Italy has proposed a security structure for the Mediterranean basin on the lines of the Helsinki Conference on Security and

Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) which groups European nations plus the United States and Canada.

"I don't think there's an alternative to the CSCM and I think everyone understands this," Mr. De Michelis told reporters after a brief meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy in Rome.

Purge

(Continued from page 1)

foreigners at the town of Safwan in southern Iraq on the edge of a

no-man's-land separating U.S. and Iraqi forces.

U.S. troops observed the men — Somalis, Sudanese, Tunisians, Algerians and Moroccans — being left but made no attempt to intervene.

Sudanese truck driver Mustafa Hamza Al Madani said he had worked in Kuwait for seven years and had legal residence papers.

Mr. Madani, 36, said he was picked up after a Palestinian who had "collaborated" with the Iraqis alleged that he had also helped them.

He said he was questioned by a Kuwait army lieutenant about his

alleged contacts. He said he was beaten morning and night and fed only one piece of bread each day during the two weeks that he was detained.

Illegal Algerian immigrant Abdul Khader Boukhatem who came to Kuwait to work last year said he was detained at the end of the war and tortured with electric shocks to his penis and fingers. He was left at the Iraqi border without shoes or papers.

He said a Moroccan taken to the border with him had been so badly beaten that American soldiers took him to hospital.

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Liverpool beats Sunderland to return to top of the league

LONDON (R) — Liverpool came from behind to beat struggling Sunderland 2-1 and return to the top of the English first division, while Aston Villa's England midfielder David Platt scored a hat-trick against Tottenham.

With leaders Arsenal not playing, Liverpool grabbed the chance to go three points clear thanks to an own goal from Gary Owers on the stroke of halftime.

Arsenal have two games in hand and play Leeds Sunday. Platt, in his second match back from a seven-week groin injury, scored his goals in a 34-minute spell to sink F.A. Cup semi-finalists Tottenham 3-2.

Tottenham, without injured England international Paul Gascoigne, the target of an £8.5 million (\$16 million) bid by Italian Lazio, pulled back from three goals down.

With Gascoigne out for at least a month following a stomach operation, Platt's return to form is a boost for England manager Graham Taylor for the crucial European Championship qualifier against Ireland in 11 days.

Manchester United failed to find the winning form they were desperately seeking before next week's return European Cup Winners' Cup quarterfinal tie in Montpellier, France.

They were held 1-1 at Nottingham after taking the lead against the F.A. Cup semi-finalists and have now gone six games without a win.

Sheffield United manager

Dave Bassett has witnessed one of the most remarkable turnarounds of his career in the past three months.

After guiding the Yorkshire club to promotion to the English first division last season, a disastrous start left them looking certain to go straight back down again.

They began the season with 12 defeats and just four draws and looked set not only to be relegated but to establish a record for the lowest amount of points gathered by a first division club.

But since winning for the first time in the season, on Dec. 22 against Nottingham Forest, there has been a complete transformation.

Sheffield United have won 10 of their last 13 league games, moved into mid-table and ironically set the longest winning streak in the first division this season.

Their 1-0 home win against Chelsea Saturday was their seventh in succession and has taken them well clear of the relegation zone in which they had languished for so long.

Bassett, whose clubs have been relegated three times and promoted six in his 10 seasons as a manager, was told by many colleagues to quit after Sheffield won promotion but he had faith that his side would not let him down.

"All right, I suppose after going 16 games without a win, I was thinking they might have a point. But I always believed that

we had the spirit and the ability to survive," he said.

Before the first victory they were eight points adrift. Now they are 14 points ahead of bottom club Derby and eight points and seven places above the relegation zone.

"Having been involved with relegated sides, I could smell when there was a relegation air about a football club and this has never been the case here," said Bassett.

The revival began at home to Forest but Bassett says the turning point was the winning goal against Derby by Glyn Hodges, who had just joined the club on loan from Crystal Palace.

"It wasn't the easiest chance and given the confidence of our existing players at the time, I don't think it away," said Bassett.

"The following week we scored four in half an hour against Southampton.

"We have nine games to go yet and we have got to finish off the job."

Out of desperation he had turned to psychology. On the dressing room wall hangs a quotation:

"The key to success isn't in great talent... they key to success is to learn how to do something right, then do it right every time."

It seems the players finally learned the way of the first division and are intent on doing it right.

Chelsea keeper Dave Beasant,

who played under Bassett at Wimbledon, said: "Players always respond to him and he had a knack of getting the best out of people."

"It's a pity United made such a bad start but at the moment they're at the middle of an incredible run and frightened of nobody."

Sunderland, promoted with them last season, have struggled to cope with first division soccer and look favourites with Derby to go down.

Their 2-1 defeat at Liverpool left them second-from-bottom and four points away from safety.

The city of Sheffield could well experience first division local derbies again next season if United's form does not falter.

Sheffield Wednesday, relegated last season, look like bouncing back after a convincing 3-1 win at fellow promotion contenders West Ham.

Third-placed Wednesday, through to the League Cup final against Manchester United next month, ended West Ham's 13-month unbeaten run at home to move to within four points of the London side, with the top three going up.

West Ham, four points behind leaders Oldham, have now won only one of their last six league games and manager Billy Bonds is concerned that his players have been drained by their F.A. Cup performances which have earned them a semi-final tie against Nottingham Forest.

Manchester United

Connors comeback delayed; Graf, Seles and Sabatini score wins

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida (AP) — Age and injuries haven't stopped him, but a downpour halted Jimmy Connors at the International Players Championships.

Connors, 38, is coming off wrist surgery, and has not won a match in two years. The former no. 1 player and winner of eight Grand Slams was 0-3 last year and dropped from no. 14 to 936.

"I went to 19 doctors and all said to rest," Connors said. "They said the wrist exploded and tendons and sheaths were severed."

But Connors was eager to see if he could play competitively again.

"I've got to find out if the wrist will hold up. If it does, it's time to play more. If not, it's time to start doing something else," Connors said.

He lost his 1991 debut on Feb. 26 in Chicago to Jaime Yzaga and went to 961 on the ATP computer.

Connors asked for and received a wild card into this tournament. The crowd favourite showed he was a bit rusty at the start of the first-round match, losing the first two games to Udo Riegelski.

Then Connors seemed to figure out the German, playing deep to his backhand and taking the net. He held at 40-15 to trail 1-2, and then broke back on a vintage Connors two-handed backhand pass. Both players held service and the match was tied 3-3 when the rain intensified and forced the match over to Sunday.

"There was absolutely no pain, just in my head," Connors said Saturday. And thanks to recent practice sessions with Boris Becker and Thomas Muster, he even felt his ground-stroke coming back.

"I don't want to go out there and play tentative," he said. "I tried that and it was no fun. The last couple of weeks I got rid of that and was striking the ball cleaner and firmer."

Earlier Saturday, Steffi Graf breezed through her second-round match, shuffling off her fall to no. 2 after a record 186 weeks as the top woman player.

"I'm not concerned who's number one or two," Graf said after defeating Erika Delone 6-1, 6-2 in 15 minutes. "To me, the tournament is important. I just want to do well."

Graf's no. 1 ranking began to slip at about this time last year, when a broken thumb loosened her hold on the racket and forced her to withdraw. That and family problems caused her to miss a month of tournaments.

"To a certain point I had a very good year," said Graf, 21, who despite not winning a Grand Slam event since the Australian Open in January 1990, still held the no. 1 rank for the fourth consecutive year. "It was also tough and didn't work out at all off the court. I began to lose my confidence."

With Graf absent and the tournament's focus on teen sensation Jennifer Capriati, Monica Seles was able to win the players championship last year, and begin her march to displace Graf at no. 1 on March 11.

Seles, seeded second because the computer ranking came out after the draw, overcame winds, drizzle, and an early start to defeat Halle Cioffi 6-1, 6-3.

Seles faltered after disputing a service call in a 5-0 game. She dropped three of the next four games to trail 0-2 in the second set before regaining her concentration at 3-3 to win the final

three games and the match.

"Last year, if anyone were to say to me I'd be number one, I would've bet it's not possible," said Seles, who at one point won 36 consecutive matches and six tournaments, including the French Open.

Seles is not intimidated about her newfound no. 1 status.

"Only time will tell who will be number one and for how long," she said. "It depends on the player and the generation coming in."

"I don't think Steffi played the way a number-one-ranked player should."

Sixth-seeded Capriati, the tournament's focus last year when she was playing in her second professional tournament at age 13, slipped quietly into the third round after a 6-3, 6-2 victory over Gigi Fernandez.

Third-seeded Gabriela Sabatini, last week's conqueror of Capriati and Graf on her way to a second straight Virginia Slims of Florida title, defeated Ann Henricksson 6-1, 6-1.

Sabatini, 4-20 against Graf before winning her last three matches, said she's got a lot of work to do before passing her in the rankings.

Stoichkov becomes Spain's top scorer

MADRID (R) — Barcelona's Bulgarian striker Kristo Stoichkov became top scorer in the Spanish first division when his team notched up another comfortable win, this time 3-0 at home against Osasuna of Pamplona.

Osasuna resisted the league leaders for only 12 minutes until Stoichkov received a pass from back Jose Alexanko and scored with his right foot.

The Bulgarian scored four times against Athletic Bilbao last weekend and Saturday's goal was his 13th this season, putting him one ahead of team mate Jose Bakero and three other players.

Seven minutes after Stoichkov's goal, Aitor Beguiristain sent a corner kick sailing across the goalmouth to the diminutive Bakero who jumped and headed the ball home.

Real Madrid collected their 10th league defeat and the third in a row, falling 1-0 away to Logrones, where they won 5-1 last year.

Yugoslav sport looks doomed to break up

BELGRADE, (R) — Yugoslav sport seems doomed to disintegrate, even if the country somehow makes it through the biggest political crisis in its history.

The Croatian Republic's branch of the Yugoslav Soccer Federation (YSF) decided last week to break away and form its own organisation.

Other important disciplines like basketball and water polo are already following suit to divide the once monolithic Yugoslav sports family.

Prompted by a week of dramatic events, when police clashed with anti-Communist protesters, tanks rolled through the streets of Belgrade and the state president resigned, sportsmen and women declared they had had enough.

"There is no choice but to split," said Mateja Svet, former Alpine skiing world slalom champion and Olympic silver medalist.

But Svet, who comes from Slovenia, the most rebellious of Yugoslavia's six republics, thinks the process may be difficult.

"The international sports bodies won't accept different organisations from six republics easily, especially as a state," she said. "But it's important to start early."

FIFA, world soccer's governing body, has already said it is not happy with Croatia's move, informing the YSF that FIFA recognises only the Yugoslav national team and only clubs registered by the YSF.

Spectators, however, think differently.

The Yugoslav national team were whistled at and booed even before the start of last May's pre-World Cup friendly with the Netherlands in Zagreb, the Croatian capital.

Since then traditional rivalries between Croatia and Serbia, the largest republic which favours central Yugoslav rule, have worsened.

"Very few things labelled as Yugoslav are liked in Slovenia

and Croatia nowadays," said Marko Illesic, president of the YSF.

"Sport should not be mixed with politics," he said. "Too many people are led by their political reasoning and too many sports officials act under the dictate of politicians."

But the process of division seems as unstoppable as last year's unification of east and west Germany, and just as problematic.

Slovenian skiers plastered stickers with their republic's name over the word Yugoslavia on their equipment during the last Alpine and Nordic World Championships.

Belgrade media reported Saturday that Serbia intended to form its own Olympic Committee in the near future.

The associations for basketball, water polo and handball — three of Yugoslavia's most successful sports internationally — have all hinted they intend to go their own ways.

Adding to Yugoslav sport's problem, mounting tension and the threat of civil war could make foreign teams consider avoiding events in the country.

They may follow the example of Belgian table tennis players who refused to travel to Yugoslavia last Monday for a European League match because of fears for their safety.

Some Yugoslav sports stars are unhappy with the situation.

"I am an individual, so I don't care about institutions," said the world's seventh-ranked tennis player Goran Ivanisevic.

"But I felt ashamed when I played at the Australian Open in January and Croatian fans burned Yugoslav flags," he said.

Jure Zdravc, a member of the Yugoslav basketball team which won last year's world title with ease, said: "I find it hard to believe we will never play together again. But, sportswise, Yugoslavia has virtually ceased to exist as a country."

Auxerre keeps outside challenge for league title

PARIS (R) — Auxerre maintained its outside challenge for the French League title by scoring five goals against Nice but elsewhere goals dried up with only 17 in the weekend's 10 matches.

With leaders Marseille drawing 1-1 in St. Etienne Friday, Auxerre closed the gap to five points in their 5-1 rampage against Nice.

The home side were 4-1 up at halftime with Daniel Dutel, Michel Catalano, Christophe Cocard and Enzo Scifo, from the penalty spot, all getting on the scoresheet as did Fabrice Mege of Nice.

If the pace slowed down in the second period, Auxerre did at least come up with the best action of the game. Recalled Hungarian strikers Kalman Kovacs beat five men in a brilliant dribble before grabbing the fifth goal in the 65th

minute.

But the other matches provided no relief to a general malaise which has given the French League the lowest scoring rate of the major European countries this season.

Monaco are now a point behind Auxerre in third place after being held to a goalless draw by neighbouring Cannes, who have gone 13 games without defeat.

The team guided by Luis Fernandez have risen to fifth in the table and are in with a chance of qualifying for the UEFA Cup next season.

At the other end of the table, troubled Bordeaux's crisis deepened with a 1-0 away defeat to Paris St. Germain whose Yugoslav midfielder Safet Susic scored from a 19th minute penalty.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, MARCH 18, 1991

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Wright Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Beneath all the odd situations occurring today there is a strong positive undercurrent that bodes you out on top in an atmosphere that is streamlined and inspirational.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You have lots of duties now which it is just not the right time to put in motion so accept this and keep plugging away at what is tried and true.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You have a feeling you are being imposed upon and life may be doing just that to get you to let go of something that has served its usefulness.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Please certainly can be a problem to you now and its heat that you do let them see that you do not judge them nor that you approve of things you don't like.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) There are a number of highly inflammable subjects you would be wise to avoid bringing up with an individual or you will have trouble.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You are certainly eager to have some new interests in your life and it's alright to look into them now so long as you do not put them actively in motion.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) This is your time to do the things that get you rid of all kinds

of obligations that you feel are holding you back for now once they are out of the way.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Take some time out to find what others expect from you and even if your associates are in a bad humor don't get upset for they have problems to solve.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You have that eager desire now to get behind you those duties that are yours and that you have been trying to pawn off to someone else.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) There is some new situation facing you that you are not sure what to do about so use that old adage "when in doubt do nothing."

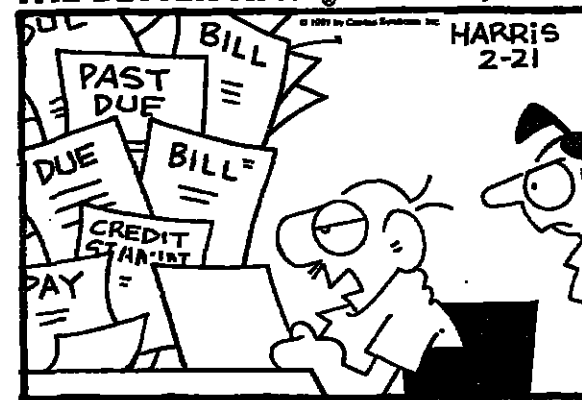
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Open up your consciousness to what one in a powerful position expects of you and do the things that you know are the ones to bring him around to your side.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) A personal friend sees through a plan to put you on the spot and his best you listen to his suggestions rather than going it entirely alone.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Whatever you have in mind that does bring to light the best way to get rid of those annoyances that have been troubling you is ok.

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



"Is it 'till death do us part' or 'till debt do us part'?"

JUMBLE.

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

BELZA
YANON
SLAFTE
THACED



ANSWER: HIS AND

Saturday's Jumbles: LEAKY YEARN PONDER WATER Answer: Some women who are the "picture" of health are just -- PAINTED THAT WAY

THE Daily Crossword

by Florence C. Adler



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Saturday's Puzzle Solved:

NAME CHAP STAIRS
DOES HAVE MENLO
DISC LORE ORIEL
TUSASMAN WORLD
CELES ETEA
SPHAT STAIN ORIA
PLAGUES LAS DALL
LITOPOTRE WORLD
DIED RRA LARRE
TIAN ADAM DOTES
ORE DOOL
DEADLY WERWOLF
MASSIE BOAT GOLD
ASTUTE DMIT USED
CBBET EERY EESH

45 "To -- and a 48 Follow
bone... 49 Gull
50 Me Home
51 Malicious look
52 Choose
46 Musical
47 Lively
DOWN
1 Heavy shoe
2 Street
3 Song
4 Decree
5 More intransigent
6 Blood of the gods
7 Stupefy
8 Melody
9 Likely
10 Respect
11 Strapped
12 Drink to excess
13 Onent
14 Hastened
15 Blow off
16 Temporary abode
17 Boring tool in music
18 Prehistoric monument in Eng.
19 Set a value on
20 Farid
21 Recluse
22 Pitcher
23 Relent
24 Redding
25 A do
26 Door opener of a kind
27 EIA e.g.
28 Panathy
29 Lofy
30 Instructor
31 Musical Met

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAN HIRSCH

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WHOSE HAND?

North-South vulnerable. East deals.

NORTH
♠ K Q 3
♥ 10 7 6 5
♦ 7 5 3
♣ A Q

EAST
♠ A 10 6
♥ A 2
♦ 4
♣ J 10 9 8 6

SOUTH
♠ 4 2
♥ 9 8 4 3
♦ A K 3
♣ K 6 3

The bidding:
East South West North
1 Pass 4 Pass
Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Four of
Over the years, great players have been credited with playing or defending hands they had never even seen. Among the best-known of these was a hand reputedly declared by Giorgio Belladonna at the 1965 European Championship which, in fact, was a problem composed by Paul Lukas. The latest to make the rounds is the above hand, credited to Jaime Ortiz-Patino, president emeritus of the World Bridge Federation, in the Daily Bulletin of the Central American Championships. World-class players who have

earned the respect of their peers through their own brilliancies do not need artificial enhancement of their reputations by sycophants. To his credit, Lukas was quick to disclaim a dazzling defensive effort attributed to him, stating unequivocally that neither he nor his partner, Pietro Bernasconi, ever saw the hand.

No auction was given, but it might go as in the diagram. West leads a diamond in response to East's opening bid and, in an attempt to get rid of a diamond from dummy, declarer wins, cashes dummy's club winners and plays a spade. East captures the king with the ace and reverts to diamonds, leading the queen.

When declarer covers with the ace, it does not help West to ruff with the deuce. Declarer will win any return and dispose of a diamond on the king of clubs, using a spade ruff as an entry. When the trump honors crash, the defenders score only a spade, a ruff and one trump.

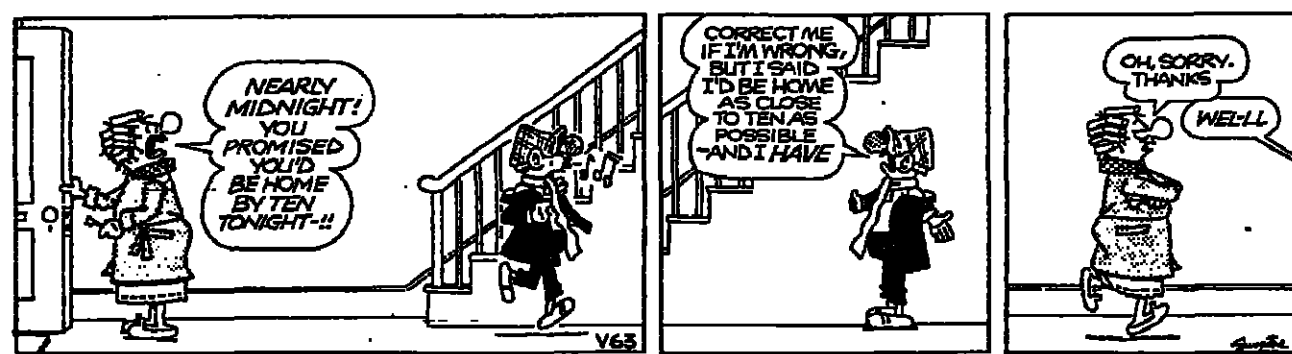
The secret of the hand is for West to ruff with the ace of trumps! That alone is not enough. West must now lead a trump to enable his partner to gain the lead and cash a diamond before declarer can take a discard.

It sure smells like a composed problem to us!

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



U.S. wholesale prices, factory production plunge in February

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. wholesale prices and industrial production fell steeply in February, the government has said in reports that showed a recessionary economy still tumbling.

"It looks lousy," said Dana Johnson, chief economist at First Chicago Corp. "The manufacturing sector is really taking a beating."

But Wall Street analysts said the reports may be the last really bad news before signs of a recovery begin to appear.

With the Gulf war over and oil prices back at relatively low levels, consumer confidence should rebound and economists expect business to pick up soon.

In fact, economists are uncertain whether further interest rate cuts are needed to end the recession.

"We don't need much more in the way of interest rate declines since the recipe for recovery is in place," said Nicholas Perma, economist at Shawmut Corp. "But there is a little room — given that the economy is yet to bottom out."

Production at factories, mines and utilities fell 0.8 per cent in February, leaving plants operating at just 79.1 per cent of capacity, the lowest level in more than four years, the Federal Reserve Board said.

The sluggish demand for manufactured goods helped restrain wholesale price gains.

The Labour Department said

its producer price index fell by 0.6 per cent in February, its third straight monthly decline.

Most of the drop was due to plunging energy costs, down 5.1 per cent in February after January's 2.5 per cent decline.

A worldwide glut of oil has held down energy prices despite war damage to facilities in the Middle East.

Less encouraging was the core rate of wholesale inflation, which excludes the volatile food and energy categories.

This rose an uncomfortable 0.4 per cent in February — a gain that weighed heavily on financial markets.

Economists noted that the core rate was down from January's 0.5 per cent, noting the Federal Reserve (Fed) looks at longer-term patterns and may be encouraged by signs of future price moderation.

Economists also saw signs of easing inflation.

Data showed that prices of intermediate goods fell 0.1 per cent in February after rising 0.1 per cent in January, and unprocessed goods prices rose 0.2 per cent, down from January's 0.3 per cent rise.

"A continuing decline in the pipeline does offer hope that you won't see a lot of inflation coming through," said Gary Ciminero, economist at Fleet-Norstar Financial Corp.

A slowdown in the pace of wholesale inflation would provide

comfort to the Fed, which has been steadily lowering interest rates since July in an attempt to revive the economy.

Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan indicated that the moderating inflation provides room to lower rates further.

But he also said he was constrained by financial markets, which fear lower rates will spark a new inflationary spiral.

In another report, U.S. retail sales increased by 0.8 per cent in February, the first monthly rise since last October.

Stronger car sales helped pull total retail sales up after a revised decline of 1.4 per cent in January. Sales fell 1.8 per cent in December and were unchanged in November.

February's rise in retail sales was well above economists' expectations for a 0.3 per cent increase. Analysts have been watching closely for signs of revived consumer spending that might lift the American economy out of recession now that the Gulf war has ended.

The rise last month left overall retail sales at a seasonally adjusted \$148.13 billion, up from \$148.99 billion in January. Sales in February 1990 totalled \$149.66 billion.

The last monthly increase in retail sales was last October, when sales rose a scant 0.1 per cent.

But excluding cars, retail sales rose only 0.2 per cent in February, after a 0.6 per cent drop in January.

Some new surveys show that consumer confidence may be improving now that the war is over. Since consumers fuel about two-thirds of U.S. economic activity through purchases of goods and services, any such sign is closely monitored as a possible precursor to renewed growth.

Hong Kong resumes trade with Kuwait

HONG KONG (R) — Hong Kong has resumed trade with Kuwait now that the Gulf war has ended.

Trade and economic sanctions against Iraq still stand.

A trade department spokesman said in a statement that Hong Kong Governor Sir David Wilson had issued an open general licence calling for trade with Kuwait to be reopened.

"Following the cessation of hostilities in the Gulf and the restoration of a legitimate government in Kuwait, it is now considered appropriate for Hong Kong to resume trade relations with Kuwait," the spokesman said in a statement.

Hong Kong imposed sanctions against Iraq and Kuwait on Aug. 9, one week after Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait.

Neither country is a major trading partner of Hong Kong.

Hong Kong's Trade Development Council said the British colony's exports to Kuwait totalled 1.01 billion Hong Kong dollars (\$129.5 million) in 1989, the latest data available, while exports to Iraq totalled 79.3 million dollars (\$10 million).

Imports totalled 139.5 million dollars (\$17.9 million) from Kuwait and 10,000 dollars (\$1,030) from Iraq.

The council said Hong Kong mainly exports and reexports garments, watches and toys to Kuwait, and garments to Iraq.

The colony buys petroleum products from Kuwait, the council said, adding it did not track imports from Iraq owing to the comparatively small sum.

EC says rebuilding Kuwait and Iraq could cost \$400b

STRASBOURG, France (R) — The cost of repairing Gulf war damage to Kuwait and Iraq could be as high as \$400 billion over the next 10 years, a senior European Community (EC) official has said.

"The reconstruction needs of Iraq and Kuwait are gigantic and can be estimated at between \$200 and \$400 billion over the next 10 years," Abel Matutes, EC Commissioner for Mediterranean Affairs, told the European Parliament.

He said oil revenues would meet some of the cost but a concerted multinational effort was needed to finance economic development in the Mediterranean and the Middle East as a whole.

The European Commission was working on plans for such a scheme, he said. Countries of the region would play the biggest role as both donors and recipients, and international financial institutions like the World Bank should help coordinate the aid.

Kuwait's oil minister said earlier that Iraq had caused "catastrophic" damage to Kuwaiti oil fields and half the wellhead fires would need lengthy drilling repairs.

which are on fire, that means it will take a very, very long time," he said.

Ameeri said around half of the burning wells only needed to be capped to be brought under control — a process which Kuwaiti experts say would take a minimum of two weeks for each wellhead.

The rest would require special drilling techniques. "You might have to drill several times before hitting the right place — it's a very sophisticated, lengthy and expensive process."

U.S. firms Red Adair Co., Bowden Wild Well Control and Boots and Coots and the Canadian company Safety Boss were each providing two firefighting teams, Ameeri said. Kuwait had contracted another 30 companies to provide support services.

The first step would be to tackle burned-out wellheads which were spewing millions of dollars worth of oil onto the desert.

"There are some wells which are blown out and no longer on fire but they are gushing oil all over the place, making huge lakes which are still spreading," he said.

"The experts say we have to ignite them because if we wait too long and they catch fire it will be difficult to fight the other fires," he said.

Ameeri said smoke and toxic hydrogen sulphide fumes made aerial surveys difficult and dangerous.

He said he did not know how long it would take Kuwait — which before Iraq's invasion accounted for nearly 7.5 per cent of OPEC production — to begin exporting crude again.

But he said the Kuwaiti government was considering drilling new wells to speed up the process and to begin producing enough crude to meet immediate domestic needs.

"Actually we have to drill new wells while we are putting out the fires — if we wait until we put out all the fires it will be too late, we need some oil during this period," he stressed.

Ameeri did not give details on where the drilling might take place but said that two or three crude gathering centres in some of the oilfields could be repaired quickly.

British poll tax seems doomed

LONDON (R) — Prime Minister John Major appears poised for one of the biggest U-turns in modern British politics, a drastic reform of a system of local taxation which was a hallmark of Margaret Thatcher's last years in office.

Political sources said the cabinet led by Major has nearly ended a review of the hated community charge — dubbed poll tax.

Under Thatcher, this levy on every adult replaced a property tax as the way Britain raises money to pay for services provided by local government, ranging from schools to refuse collection.

It provoked riots and has lost the ruling Conservatives key by-elections.

An opinion survey in the Independent newspaper has found that 90 per cent of respondents wanted the levy replaced, wholly or partly, by the traditional property tax.

Political sources said the cabinet was likely to announce a reform this week although details were not available.

On Thursday, Major himself

said only that "we are close to settling proposals that are fair."

Newspapers said one option was a form of property tax which would assume three adults per household. Discounts might be given where there were fewer.

An element of head-counting might help placate 60 Conservative members of parliament who signed a letter saying they could not support a straight return to taxing property.

Thatcher favoured a head tax on the argument that everyone should pay. Critics said it fell unfairly on both rich and poor.

taking no account of what people could afford.

Most household bills rose sharply.

The tax, as well as Thatcher's hostility to closer European Community (EC) integration, were among reasons for a revolt among Conservative backbenchers that led her to resign after more than 11 years in power.

The economy is in recession, with figures showing unemployment had risen above two million, and Labour will continue to harry the government on the poll tax.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Sunday, March 17, 1991				
Central Bank official rates				
	Buy	Sell		
U.S. dollar	673.0	677.0	Japanese yen (for 100)	488.1 491.0
Pound Sterling	1252.2	1232.6	Dutch guilder	371.4 373.6
Deutschemark	418.4	420.9	Swedish crown	114.7 115.4
Swiss franc	482.5	485.4	Italian lira (for 100)	56.1 56.4
French franc	122.9	123.6	Belgian franc (for 10)	203.2 204.4

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AGENTS & REPRESENTATIVE WORLD WIDE

JORDAN WELFARE LOTTERY

Ordinary issue No 5

Drawing of: March 17, 1991

Winning Tickets

Holder of ticket No. 48823 Wins JD 25,000	Ten consolation prizes totalling JD1,000 each wins JD 100 48824 48833 48923 49823 58823 48822 48813 48723 47823 38823
Holder of ticket No. 58031 Wins JD 6,000	Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 600 each wins JD 60 58032 58041 58131 59031 68031 58030 58021 58931 57031 48031
Holder of ticket No. 21160 Wins JD 3,000	Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 300 each wins JD 30 21161 21170 21260 22160 31160 21169 21150 21060 20160 11160
Holder of ticket No. 17184 Wins JD 2,500	Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 200 each wins JD 20 17185 17194 17284 18184 27184 17183 17174 17084 16184 07184
Holder of ticket No. 50799 Wins JD 1,500	Ten consolation prizes totalling JD150 each wins JD 15 50790 50709 50899 51799 60799 50798 50789 50699 59799 40799
Holder of ticket No. 61969 Wins JD 1,200	Ten consolation prizes totalling JD100 each wins JD 10 61960 61979 61069 62969 71969 61968 61959 61869 60969 51969
Holder of ticket No. 17065 Wins JD 1,000	Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 80 each wins JD 8 17066 17075 17165 18065 27065 17064 17055 17965 16065 07065
Holder of ticket No. 73621 Wins JD 600	Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 70 each wins JD 7 73622 73631 73721 74621 03621 73620 73611 73521 72621 63621

Ticket numbers **39982 14341 35286 00311** win JD 200 each

Ticket numbers **22049 45054 75047** win JD 100 each

TICKETS ENDING WITH

8469 9258 2371 4274 7782 Win JD 20 each	4202 3406 7827 5867 9080 Win JD 10 each
067 540 946 652 793 Win JD 5 each	
8000 tickets ending with 4 Win JD 2 each.	

COVER PRIZES FOR THE LOTTERY SELLERS

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Winners of the grand prizes in the ordinary issue number **4** of March 2, 1991

Mohammad Al Marzouq Amman - Consultant Half first JD 12,500	Khalil Al Rubel'at Zarga - Driver Half first JD 12,500	Humoud Suleiman Madaba - Merchant Half second JD 3,000	Abdul Wahab 'Eitan Zarga - Policeman Half third JD 1,500	Samir Yassin Amman - Merchant Half third JD 1,500	Ibrahim Hijawi Amman - Unemployed Full fourth JD 2,500	Ahmad Al Duweik Amman - Student Half fifth JD 750

Next Drawing takes place on **April 2, 1991**

First eight biggest prizes are issued from GUVS headquarters.

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IN
THE COUCH TRIP

3:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema **PHILADELPHIA** Tel: 634144

FRANTIC

12:30, 3:30, 8:30 2:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30

Cinema **NIJOM** Tel: 675571

THE PUNISHER
Show: 12:30, 3:30 p.m.
Play
"No For Despair"

Show: 8:30 p.m.
Friday & Sunday extra show at 11:00 a.m.

Cinema **PLAZA** Tel: 699238

DEALING WITH SATANS
(Arabic)

Show: 12:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30 p.m.

Soviet referendum heightens anti-Russian feeling in Romania

BUCHAREST (R) — The referendum on the future of the Soviet Union has heightened anti-Russian feeling in neighbouring ex-Communist Romania, fuelling calls for Moscow to return the former Romanian territory of Moldova.

"Russia is yours, Romania is ours," and "Jackboots out of Moldova" became popular slogans ahead of the Sunday poll.

Many thousands of Romanians joined demonstrations over the past week to support the Romanian majority in the Soviet republic and demand the removal of the frontier along the River Prut, which they view as a second Berlin Wall.

A string of protest notes from many political parties and pressure groups flooded Romanian media attacking Moscow's "crude interference" in Moldova. And such sentiments were echoed at a weekend congress of the ruling National Salvation Front (NSF).

"We are body and soul with our brothers in Moldova," said a resolution adopted by the NSF national convention. It expressed concern about tension generated by the referendum, which asks Soviet citizens if they want to retain some form of federation.

The province of Bessarabia and the northern part of Bucovina were annexed from Romania by

the Red Army in 1940 under a Nazi-Soviet pact. Bessarabia was incorporated into the Soviet Republic of Moldova and northern Bucovina into Ukraine.

Romanians have been bombarded in the press by harsh anti-Moscow statements from Moldovan leaders and on television by pictures showing clashes between Moldovan civilians and Soviet soldiers in the run-up to the referendum.

The non-Communist leaders of Moldova, which has a population of 4.3 million, declared the republic's sovereignty last year after making Romanian the official language in 1989. This brought them into conflict with a Russian minority and President Mikhail Gorbachev's efforts to hold the Soviet Union together.

Romanian television reports have quoted Moldovan police as accusing soldiers of entering civilian homes in search of alcohol, drinking them dry and damaging furniture, and of scaring people by firing guns in the forests at night.

At a demonstration by more than 4,000 people in Bucharest Saturday, Gheorghe Gavrila Copil, leader of a large pro-Moldova association, urged Romania's parliament to assemble jointly with the parliament of Moldova on March 27.

That day is the 73rd anniversary of Moldova's decision to unite with the other Romanian territories in a single state after World War I. Such a joint session would be a strong challenge to Moscow's authority.

"The Soviet referendum continues the crime of 1940," said one banner waved at the demonstration.

"We are deeply concerned about the situation created in Moldova in connection with the referendum," the NSF said, noting that the republic had categorically rejected holding the vote but that Moscow had intervened.

The NSF repeated allegations that Moscow had sent in soldiers and civilians from other areas to alter the proportion of the electorate in favour of keeping a federation.

It said such moves, along with the holding of the vote in military units, were a bid to rig the result. This was undemocratic and contradicted European trends, it said.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Petre Roman seems to be dominating the congress of Romania's ruling National Salvation front (NSF) but his appeal to create a modern social democratic party failed to silence critics.

Roman won loud applause on the first day of the national con-

vention Saturday when he urged 705 delegates and hundreds of supporters to back the government's market-oriented reforms and embrace his Western-style social democratic programme.

"The NSF has imposed itself... as the party for breaking with the Communist system, with conservative nostalgia or utopian programmes, and as an organisation for economic and political construction," Roman said.

Roman came under fierce attack from some who were in the front line of the revolution which toppled Stalinist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and swept the NSF to power in December 1989.

"The government has concentrated itself around technocrats and used Roman's strong personality to take over the party's leadership," Senator Dan Iosif said.

Iosif, 39, who fought against Ceausescu's security forces 15 months ago, voiced young radicals' disillusion with the present leaders and accused them of abandoning those who risked their lives to bring Roman and President Ion Iliescu to power.

Roman dismissed the accusations as untrue and unfair and brushed aside criticism levelled at him by front conservatives who accused him of being too reckless in his reform drive.

Soviet TV sacks 3 news presenters

MOSCOW (R) — Soviet television authorities said Sunday they had sacked three presenters of a popular news programme which held out until last week against attempts to censor its independent reporting.

The Television News Service (TSN) programme, broadcast three times a day, will remain on the air. But replacement presenters are likely to be more conservative than their predecessors, who offered a lively alternative to the main evening news.

A spokesman for the state radio and television company gave no reason for the dismissal of the three TSN presenters — Tatyana Mitkova, Yuri Rostov and Dmitri Kiselyov.

But their sacking follows the suspension of a controversial current affairs programme in January and a general tightening of restrictions on the Soviet broadcast media.

Independent newspaper still flourish alongside the official press, which invariably promotes a Kremlin view on controversial domestic issues such as ties between the centre and republics.

One of the dismissed TSN presenters was reprimanded this year after reading an official account of military action against separatists in the Baltic republics and then adding: "This is the only version that we are allowed to give."

The liberal newspaper Komsoolskaya Pravda noted last week that TSN had lost some of its earlier dynamism.

It said chief editor Olav Kakuchai had cut out 80 per cent of the content of Monday's programme. "Yuri Rostov was on duty that day and he believed it to be his duty to refuse to appear on the air," the newspaper said.

"I consider the programme to have its own image. To present the news in such a mutilated way... would not be right," it quoted Rostov as saying.

Rostov said the censored sections included reports on Russian republican leader Boris Yeltsin, the coalminers' strike and clashes between police and demonstrators in Yugoslavia.

Several television and radio journalists have complained about censorship since Communist Party Central Committee official Leonid Kravchenko took over as head of the State Broadcasting Service in November.

Minister: Albania is at turning point in history

NEW YORK (R) — Albania's Foreign Minister has said that Europe's last bastion of orthodox communism, which this week renewed diplomatic relations with the United States after a break of 52 years, was at a turning point in its history.

"I think restoring diplomatic relations at this stage with the United States is of special significance... Albania is now at the threshold, it is going through really exciting times, a turning point in its history," said Foreign Minister Muhamet Kapllani.

In an interview conducted here with Visnews, the international television news agency, Kapllani said Albania's first multi-party elections in 40 years scheduled for March 31 would be overseen by observers from countries including the United States, Britain, France, Italy and the Soviet Union.

Kapllani said Albania welcomed elections that would produce "a really truly representative parliament, a pluralistic parliament, out of which will come the future government."

Relations between Albania and the United States were broken in 1939 when fascist Italy invaded and occupied Albania. They were not restored after World War II because Washington said Tirana refused to recognise the validity

of pre-war treaties with the United States.

For 40 years the tiny Balkan state was cut off from the outside world by the isolationist policies of Stalinist leader Enver Hoxha. His successor Ramiz Alia, who took over in 1985, cautiously introduced some reforms, but his country was swept by December since student protests in December and some 20,000 disillusioned Albanians fled the country.

Kapllani said there would be no penalties for those Albanians who opted to return to their homeland.

"They will not suffer any consequences if they return soon... we have been very, very tolerant. Because we understand we have to deal with an abnormal situation when people mainly for economic reasons are sometimes just tempted to go abroad, and many of the thousands have returned."

Kapllani said his government was committed to a market-oriented economy and was ready to "join in the mainstream of the European and international economic relations."

"Our society is being renewed, reformed radically in the political, economic, social fields, in whole areas embracing the life of the country," he said.

Inkatha supporters rally in South Africa town

ALEXANDRIA, South Africa (AP) — More than 2,000 Inkatha Freedom Party supporters rallied Sunday in this tense black township, chanting, singing and waving homemade clubs and spears, under the gaze of police and soldiers.

Police reported an Inkatha supporter was hacked to death near the rally site and that security forces had to stop armed bands from leaving the rally to attack township residents.

A police said two men were stabbed to death overnight in Alexandria and that three other people died in unrest incidents in other areas.

Sunday's rally, which Inkatha called part of its effort to help stop township violence, came a week after authorities declared Alexandria an unrest area because of faction fighting that killed dozens of people.

"Zulu, Zulu," shouted the bands of armed men wearing red headbands as the Zulu-dominated Inkatha as they moved through township streets

under the gaze of security forces and bystanders.

Soldiers in full battle uniform, many carrying automatic rifles, and police with shotguns accompanied the war bands from workers' hostels where many Zulus live. A yellow police helicopter circled overhead.

More Inkatha supporters travelled by taxi to Alexandria, the only township in Johannesburg's city limits. Police stopped them outside Alexandria to regulate their entrance and take away some of their spears, knives, axes and machetes.

At one hostel, a police lieutenant negotiated with Inkatha officials about what weapons the supporters could carry.

"I'm willing to escort the people down there," he said, "but no spears, no pangas (machetes), no axes."

A man carrying a spear responded: "This is a tradition with us." Gesturing to township residents watching from the roadside, he said, "They are not disarmed, our enemies."

10 killed in California plane crash

SAN DIEGO, California (AP) — Seven members of country-western singer Reba McEntire's band and her road manager were among 10 people killed when a private jet crashed Saturday just north of the Mexican border.

There were no survivors, said Elly Brekke, a spokeswoman for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Miss McEntire, who had given a private concert Friday night in San Diego, was not on the jet, said Jenny Bohler, a spokeswoman for the singer.

"Needless to say Reba is very upset. They all had been with her a long time. They were like family. She's lost eight family members," Ms. Bohler said.

The Hawker Sidelley twin-engine jet crashed at 1:45 a.m. (1045 GMT) in rugged canyon country about 45 kilometres southeast of downtown San Diego. The National Transportation Safety Board was investigating, Ms. Brekke said.

The plane, bound for Amarillo, Texas, had just taken off from Brown Field, a private airfield about 24 kilometres south east of San Diego and six kilometres north of the Mexican border.

Personnel at the U.S. Navy's North Island Naval Air Station,

about 24 kilometres away from where the plane crashed, reported seeing a fireball as it went down near Otay Mountain. Ms. Brekke said.

Ms. Bohler said the people aboard included Miss McEntire's tour manager, Jim Hammon; band leader and keyboardist Kirk Cappello; vocalist Paula Kaye Evans; guitarist Michael Thomas and Terry Jackson; keyboardist Joey Cigainero; drummer Tony Saputo, and Chris Austin, a vocalist who played fiddle and acoustic guitar.

All the band members lived in Nashville, Tennessee, and were under 30 years old, Ms. Bohler said.

"Her main concern is the families of the band," Ms. Bohler said. "That's all she can think about right now."

Two other band members and several members of Miss McEntire's road crew had left San Diego for Fort Wayne on another flight before the crash, Ms. Bohler said.

Also killed in the crash were pilot Don Holmes and co-pilot Chris Hollinger, said a statement by the San Diego County Sheriff's Department.

The pilot was filing an amended flight plan over the

radio with air traffic controllers when they lost contact with the plane, Ms. Brekke said.

Darkness, wet conditions and difficult terrain prevented sheriff's deputies from reaching the site until daybreak.

The crash and fire bakened shrub and grass, and wreckage was strewn about a hillside, said Sheriff's Sgt. Don Fowler.

Rain had fallen Friday night but had stopped before the plane took off, Ms. Brekke said.

Miss McEntire and her band had been scheduled to play Saturday night in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Sunday in Evansville, Indiana, Ms. Bohler said.

Ms. Bohler said she didn't know why the plane was headed for Amarillo. "It could have been routed that way or headed there for refuelling and then go on to Indiana."

Miss McEntire, 35, is the only singer ever voted female vocalist of the year four times by the Country Music Association.

Her album Greatest Hits went platinum, selling more than a million copies. She won a Grammy in 1987 for the album, *Whoever's in the New England*.

Her other hit records include *Little Rock*, *Walk On* and *Rumour Has It*.

Cambodian government offensive 'stalled'

BANGKOK (AP) — A Cambodian guerrilla faction said Sunday that its forces have stalled a week-old government offensive in western Cambodia that has caused dozens of casualties among civilians and combatants.

By late Saturday, the guerrillas had retaken all key defensive positions south east of their stronghold of Thmar Puok that had fallen to government troops during the offensive, said OK Serai Sopheak, military spokesman for the non-Communist Khmer People's National Liberation Front.

The counterattacks drove forces of the Vietnamese-installed government at least 23 kilometres from Thmar Puok, putting the stronghold outside artillery range, he said.

The official government media in Phnom Penh have not mentioned the fighting near Thmar Puok, Sopheak's claims could not be independently verified, but in the past his accounts of fighting have generally been considered reliable.

In all, four defensive positions were recaptured Saturday by National Liberation Front guerrillas, Sopheak said. Four others were retaken between Thursday and Saturday.

"It seems that for the time being they are not able to take Thmar Puok from us," said Sopheak, contacted by telephone in Bangkok.

He said about 6,000 government troops, backed by artillery and at least 15 Soviet-made T-54 tanks, began pushing toward Thmar Puok on March 9. The area is defended by 7,000-8,000 guerrillas, he said.

The fighting has been some of the heaviest in western Cambodia this year. Thmar Puok is about 20 kilometres from the Thai border.

Government forces shelled Thmar Puok in midweek, killing five civilians and wounding 10 others, Sopheak said.

Tamil Tigers to seek international recognition as liberation movement

COLOMBO (AP) — Tamil Tigers fighting for a separate homeland in this island nation plan to seek international recognition as a liberation movement, a rebel spokesman said Sunday. The Sri Lankan government said the rebel move should be ignored.

"We will shortly make moves to legitimise our freedom struggle under international law, like the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation)," said a rebel spokesman, Lawrence Thilaker, in a telephone interview from his Paris office.

He said the idea was being discussed with "many countries, including those in Western Europe, who will sponsor our case to the international community." He did not identify the countries.

Thilaker did not say what advantages the Tigers hoped to gain by such a move. The Palestine Liberation Organisation has been admitted as an observer to international bodies and its representatives have been accorded diplomatic status in some countries.

Bradman Weerakoon, the international affairs adviser to Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa, said the move to seek legitimacy by a "terrorist organisation" like the Tamil Tigers only deserves to be ignored.

Weerakoon repeated the government's offer to negotiate with the Tamils over their grievances. Tamils, who comprise 18 per cent of Sri Lanka's 16 million people, say they have been locked out of power and jobs by the majority Sinhalese.

Thilaker said the government had placed impossible conditions on negotiations by demanding that the Tigers disarm, that rival Tamil groups be included and that the talks must be held with fugitive Tiger leader Velupillai

Prabhakaran.

Thilaker said the rebels fear for Prabhakaran's safety if he were to attend talks with the government.

"We don't trust the government with Prabhakaran. The Tamil people will not permit us to allow him to participate in any talks with the government," Thilaker said.

The 36-year-old Prabhakaran was trained in guerrilla warfare in Lebanon in the late 1970s by Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. He is now Sri Lanka's most wanted fugitive.

Thilaker said the Tiger forces were necessary to protect the lives and property of Tamils against what he called genocide by the government.

The Tigers, formally known as the Liberation Tigers for Tamil Eelam, were established in 1976 and began a guerrilla war against the government in 1983.

able divorce between Mrs. Twiggs and I."

"I'm not seeing the same child I knew a year or two ago," he said. "The doctors are working with her. Once we have a handle on it I'll be a whole lot happier."

Blakely said the Twiggs' psychologist, Dr. Harold Smith, concluded visitation should be more frequent.

In documents filed last week in circuit court, Mrs. Twiggs quoted Kimberly as saying, "I don't want to hurt my dad's feelings, so I'll call you Mr. and Mrs. Twiggs in front of my dad, but I'll call you mom and dad when I'm just with you."

No hearing date has been scheduled.

Noting the bitterness between the two sides, O'Hara said it was "a miracle" to get the two families to agree on the script.

"My goal has been a balanced point of view," he said. "I tell two parallel stories. In 1978 two people are leaving the hospital and get on two trains. By the end of the first night the two trains collide. The second night deals with the emotional debris left all over the tracks."

COSTNER WINS DIRECTORS' AWARD

NEW YORK (AP) — First-time director Kevin Costner won the Directors Guild of America Award for best director of 1990 for his epic western, *Dances With Wolves*. Costner also starred in the film, a three-hour account of a U.S. cavalry officer living with American Indians. The film won him the Golden Globe Award as best director earlier this month. In the competition, Costner beat out veteran director Francis Ford Coppola, who was nominated for the fifth time for *The Godfather, Part III*. Also nominated were Barry Levinson for *Avalon*, Martin Scorsese for *Goodfellas* and Giuseppe Tornatore for *Cinema Paradiso*. The 43rd annual Directors Guild of America Awards were presented during ceremonies in Beverly Hills, California, and New York. The guild's 9,300 members were eligible to vote for the winner. Tornatore's film won an Oscar last year for Best Foreign Language Film and arrived in U.S. theatres in February 1990, qualifying for the guild award. It is his first guild nomination. Last year, Oliver won the guild award for his *Born On The Fourth of July*. Levinson won in 1988 for *Rain Man*. Coppola's previous four nominations were for *Apocalypse Now*, *The Conversation* and the previous two *Godfather* films. Scorsese received his third nomination, previously he was nominated for *Raging Bull* and *Taxi Driver*. *Goodfellas* has been named the best film of 1990 and Scorsese the best director by Associations of Film Critics in New York, Los Angeles and Boston.

Uganda to promote gorillas as tourist attraction

KAMPALA (R) — Uganda is planning to promote its mountain gorillas as tourist attractions to lure visitors back to the country after decades of wars and instability. "We are moving forward with gorilla tourism," Ben Otto, a senior Ministry of Tourism official, said. About 420 of the animals live in the Bwindi Forests of western Uganda, bordering Zaire and Rwanda. Tourists stopped taking safaris in Uganda with the rise of Idi Amin's government in the 1970s. Stability has returned but wildlife in the once-famous Murchison Falls and Queen Elizabeth National Parks has been largely wiped out by poachers. Uganda's tiny neighbour Rwanda earned \$15 million last year from tourism based on its gorillas, made famous by the film *Gorillas In The Mist*, Otto said. But the business has collapsed since rebels invaded the country in October. Conservationists say the war threatens 350 gorillas in Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park, where thousands of rebels are holed up. Otto said up to 800 chimpanzees in Ugandan forests near Kabale, 250 kilometres west of Kampala, should also attract tourists.

Thai charged with dealing in slavery

AUCKLAND (AP) — A Thai man appeared in court after allegedly selling a 26-year-old Thai woman for 3,000 dollars (\$1,800). Decha-Iamsakun Prasert, 42, was arrested Friday night after he allegedly sold the woman to an undercover police officer. He was charged with dealing in slavery and entered no plea. The penalty for slavery was not immediately known. Prasert is being held in custody at least until Monday to give him time to hire a lawyer and the court to secure an interpreter. Both Prasert and the woman were in New Zealand on visitors permits.

Japan's Princess Kiko expecting

TOKYO (AP) — Princess Kiko, wife of Emperor Akihito's second son, is expecting the couple's first child in October. The imperial household agency has announced. If the baby is a boy, he will stand third in line to the throne, following crown prince Naruhito, 31, and the baby's father, Prince Akishino, 25. The baby would be the emperor's first grandchild. The announcement said doctors reported the 24-year-old Kiko in good health. She and Akishino married last June 29. Naruhito, the emperor's eldest son, is still unmarried. Kiko was a graduate student at Gakushuin University and a commoner before she married her former fellow student, known then as Prince Aya. She is the daughter of a professor at the school.

Cholera fight in Peru hampered by cuts in water, electricity

LIMA (AP) — Most of the capital's 7 million residents woke up Saturday to find their faucets dry because of emergency work at the city's main water plant.

Medical experts Saturday said the water cutoff may worsen a cholera epidemic that has already killed more than 300 people. A spokesman for the water company said he was unsure how long the cutoff would last.

Workers need to remove large amounts of debris from the water plant's intake pipes, the spokesman said. The rain-swollen Rimac River is filled with many more branches and logs than usual, he said.

Most water company workers began an indefinite strike last week but the spokesman denied

the walkout has affected the plant. There are enough non-striking and managerial workers to remove the debris, he said.

Medical experts said the lack of water will make it harder for people to wash themselves and properly cook their food.

Unflushed toilets are particularly dangerous, a Health Ministry spokesman said. The many flies common during the southern hemisphere summer can quickly spread the disease, he said.

Cholera is a bacteria spread mainly by food and water contaminated by the feces of people sick with the disease.

The lack of water may become more severe Sunday, when the electric company cuts off power in most of Lima.

The company, Electrolima, says it must make emergency repairs to transmission towers that have been weakened by rust.

The electrical shutdown may last longer than planned because many Electrolima workers are expected to begin an indefinite strike Monday.

Without electricity, the pumps that move water to rooftop storage tanks of multi-story buildings cannot work.

The water company says 85 per cent of Lima residents have running water in their homes.

About 70 per cent of Lima's water comes from the Rimac River, which flows out of the Andean Mountains into the desert coastal plain. The other 30 per cent comes from wells.

SARASOTA, Florida (AP) — While Hollywood works to bring the story of babies "switched at birth" to the screen, the real-life players are heading to court in a bitter tug of war over a 12-year-old girl.

"The preliminary script we reviewed for the movie had a happy ending and it's our hope that the real-life story will have a happy ending also," said John Blakely, an attorney who is seeking visitation rights for the biological parents of Kimberly, a hazel-eyed sixth-grader.

But Bob Mays, who raised the girl from birth only to discover he was not her biological father, is worried Ernest and Regina Twiggs would share custody of his only child.

"We're still on our roller coaster ride," Mays said.

The stories of two families who unknowingly raised the other's child for more than nine years is being made into a television miniseries to be aired over two nights in the United States, likely in early May, producer Michael O'Hara said.

Kimberly, born at a tiny rural hospital in central Florida, went home with the wrong parents —

Mays and his late wife, Barbara, who died of cancer in 1981. The girl born to the Mayses, whom the Twiggs named Arlene, died of a heart defect in 1988.

Just before Arlene's death, genetic tests showed she was not the Twiggs' biological daughter.

Their search for their biological daughter led them back to Hardee Memorial Hospital in Wauchula, where Mays and Mrs. Twiggs gave birth within days of each other in winter 1978.

A three-year custody battle over Kimberly ensued. Mays, a Sarasota roofing salesman, rejected repeated requests for genetic testing to resolve the mystery.

The impasse was broken when the Twiggs agreed in writing in October 1989 not to seek custody of Kimberly, even if she turned out to be their daughter. Under the agreement, the Twiggs had the option to seek visitation.

Genetic tests showed the Twiggs were Kimberly's biological parents, and psychologists were brought in to make recommendations if and when meetings should occur.

Since last June, there have been at least five meetings between

Kimberly and the Twiggs and their seven other children, ages 8 through 23, attorneys said.

Both sides agreed the kids got along fine, but the adults had more difficulty.

Mrs. Twiggs, still reeling from Arlene's loss, was dopted herself at an early age. Getting to know Kimberly is perhaps especially important because of that background, her attorney said.

The Twiggs moved from Pennsylvania back to Florida a couple of years ago in part to be near Kimberly. They settled in Sebring, about 96 kilometres from Sarasota.

"They were on cloud nine with each of Kimberly's visits," Blakely said.

In November, Mays stopped the visitations.

He said it was a temporary move, at least through January, because he had grounded the youth for falling grades and mood swings he didn't understand.

"They chose to have their attorney write us a letter which amounted to an ultimatum to have Kimberly about half of the time," Mays said. "You would have thought it was a very ami-